BING

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THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

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BING magazine: http.//members.aol.com/macwilmslo/BING_magazine.html

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Membership renewals fall due on 1st January each year and subscription rates effective for 2002 remain as:

UK	£10 per annum
Mainland Europe, including Eire	£11 per annum
USA and Canada	US $20 per annum
Australia and New Zealand	A$30 per annum
South America	£15 per annum
Japan	£15 per annum

All remittances should be sent in **£ sterling** payable to 'Michael Crampton - ICC' with the exception of (a) US and Canadian members who should send their remittances in US dollars to F. B. Wiggins (b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars (c) Mainland European members (not Eire) who should pay Etty Gits in £ sterling. For addresses see inside front cover.

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor.
Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer.

BING is the official journal of the International Crosby Circle and is published in the Spring, Summer and Winter of each year. Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICC. All original material © Copyright ICC 2002.

EDITORIAL

I am delighted to announce that the merger with Club Crosby has been agreed and will take effect in the Summer of 2003 when Club Crosby will change its name to The International Club Crosby and the International Crosby Circle will form part of it. Wig and Wayne Martin are discussing the finer details of the merger and we will set out these in our next issue. The enlarged club will endeavour to continue the prestigious and long legacy of Club Crosby and it is intended to secure the long term future of our two organisations by this alliance. BING magazine will be the journal of the enlarged club.

As previously announced, the formal start of the Centenary Campaign will be the Hofstra event in November. We are also putting together a major celebration at Gonzaga on May 3 and details are given elsewhere in the magazine. We are most grateful to new member Judy Schmid for her energy, enthusiasm and expertise in making this tentative idea become reality. Already members are active in publicising the centenary and to give three examples of the work going on in the UK, we have Roger Addey writing to various golf magazines, Ron Bosley speaking to a group of 35 at a local church and Trevor Wagstaff making a major submission to the Guinness Book of World Records. BBC-TV are preparing a series called "Legends" which will be shown on BBC2 next year and there will be an hour-long programme about Bing which it is hoped will be shown around May, 2003. I have been heavily involved and the BBC filmed a hour long interview with me in my little office at home. Whether any of it gets to the screen I don't know. I certainly felt very uncomfortable and unprofessional doing it.

Kathryn Crosby will be bringing out a new book about Bing later this year which will presumably follow on from her earlier "My Life With Bing". The book we are preparing about Bing's TV career is nearing completion and we shall issue this as a limited edition, similar to Lionel's radio book. Further details in the next magazine.

I am very sorry to tell you that Jim Reilly has decided to take a rest from club activities for a while. He has been heavily involved in most aspects of the club in recent years and we owe him a huge debt of gratitude for what he has done. In particular, I shall miss his support. Ron Bosley and Michael Crampton will be working together to produce the centenary calendar. Also it is with regret that I have to tell you that we are losing Etty Gits as our European representative at the end of the year due to work pressures and again our thanks are due to her for her contribution. Michael Crampton will comment more fully on these changes.

Michael will also be mentioning the death of Kate O'Reilly and I should like to take this opportunity to send my personal condolences to George and his family.

The cover photo this time was provided by Gwen Harvey and Jon Oye has kindly supplied the item for our back cover. Jon has given us a number of colour reproductions of early magazine covers featuring Bing and we shall be using these in future editions. Incidentally, in response to several queries, the front cover on our last issue dated from 1945 and it had the following caption on its reverse:

Bing's Bangtail!

Bing Crosby takes time out from rehearsals of his Kraft radio show to sign a cartoon depicting one of his racehorses and to be used on the nose of a B29 bomber.

Our thanks to Stan White for providing, for the inside back cover, a most interesting letter he received from Bing in 1957, just before Bing starred in the Edsel show. Interesting to see how Bing downplays this major event. By the way, have you noticed that our logo looks rather better nowadays? This is due to member Doug Heinle producing a new bitmap for us which the printer was delighted to receive. Thanks, Doug.

So enough from me. On with the show! I hope to see many of you at Leeds in October and Hofstra in November.

Malcolm Macfarlane

SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

As Malcolm has already advised you, the merger with **Club Crosby** is to go ahead following approval by the Club Crosby team and the agreement to proceed at last year's meeting in Leeds. Discussions are ongoing and both teams will seek to unite so as to bring to members the best practices from each of the clubs.

I would urge members to support your officers in their endeavours to bring you the best club in the world of its kind.

JIM REILLY AND ETTY GITS

It is with regret that I confirm that Etty and Jim have resigned as members of the management team. Both are standing down for personal reasons and we wish them well in their chosen endeavours. Both officers have given their all on behalf of members and we will miss their input very much.

Etty will continue to distribute the magazine to our European members until December this year and thereafter we will post copies individually until we have a new European representative. Malcolm will cover CDs until a new reviewer is appointed.

NEW MEMBERS

South Africa

Bill Humphries (KwaZulu, Natal) is our first member in South Africa and we are delighted to welcome him to the club. Bill found us via an advert in the magazine "In Tune", as did some of our new members listed below.

England

Mr. J A Britton (South Benfleet, Essex) is an enthusiastic 87-year-old Bing admirer who seeks to increase his knowledge of Bing's career, as do the following new members.

Tom Moffitt (Burnley, Lancashire), Ernie Dolman (Gray's, Essex), Renee Wood (Windermere, Cumbria), Neil Hastie (Morecambe, Lancashire), Mrs. E E Ware (Hornchurch, Essex), Roy Roberts (Yiewsley, Middlesex), Elizabeth Gregory (Sanderstead, South Croydon).

Warmest greetings to you all and may you enjoy your membership of ICC.

DONATIONS

Contributions over and above members' subscriptions are vital to the continuing success of the ICC. This year it is of particular significance because printing and distribution costs will rise by £200 per issue. We are grateful for support from the following members who gave extra or who bought back issues.

Norman Palmer (Stanley, Co Durham), Richard Cane (Dulwich, London), Matthew Conroy (Dublin 11), Charles Wilkinson (Belfast, Northern Ireland), Ernie Dolman (Gray's, Essex), Gerard Hanlon (Waterford, Ireland), George Adey (Wolverhampton, Bill Wesley (Upminster, Essex) and Frank G. Cotterill (Liverpool).

DEATHS

Members will be saddened to learn of the passing of Kate O'Reilly, dear wife and lifelong companion of George O'Reilly, of Malahide, Co Dublin. Our very sincere condolences are extended to George and our prayers are offered for a very special lady. RIP

MEMBERSHIP

Following my appeal to 130 members in February I am pleased to report that all but 26 responded and our membership in the United Kingdom continues to be above 500. Unfortunately, the US/Canadian numbers have fallen, chiefly due to deaths, but Wig has continued his magnificent recruitment effort and North American members total around 400.

Membership details are: -

1.	British Isles	508
2.	USA - Canada	400
3.	Australia and New Zealand	48
4.	Europe	25
5.	South America	4
6.	South Africa	1
7.	Japan	3
8.	Singapore	1

These figures indicate that our membership remains around 1000 but also we have too few members in many countries. I would be interested to learn from members how they think we might increase our numbers in countries where we have no representatives.

LEEDS 2002

The 37th Annual/Dinner Meeting to be held in Leeds on the 1st Sunday of October will almost certainly be the last to be held in the name of the International Crosby Circle. The merger with Club Crosby will mean that we will meet in the name of **The International Club Crosby** and meetings will of course reflect our new arrangements. Leeds will continue, assuming the new team agrees and hopefully we can look forward to similar meetings in other countries in the name of the new club.

This year at Leeds we intend that members celebrate their interest in Bing and we will have some film to engage members' interest along with the usual musical interludes.

Please come along and tell your management team what you seek to gain from your membership

in the years to come and how best we can make the new club arrangements work in the interest of our worldwide membership.

Finally can I appeal to members to consider helping your management team by taking on the two vacant roles and to reflect on my comments on succession planning.

Until winter, Aloha.

Michael Crampton

Rosemary Clooney

The sad news of Rosemary's death came just after we went to press at the end of June although we had been forewarned by the following news release:

FROM E!ONLINE NEWS

Rosemary Clooney's Cancer Relapse

by Josh Grossberg - Jun 27, 2002, 11:45 AM PT

Rosemary Clooney is ailing. The veteran entertainer, known for her jazzy hits and such film roles as 1954's classic 'White Christmas' with Bing Crosby, was hospitalized briefly this month after suffering a setback in her battle with lung cancer. She is now continuing her treatment at home, her publicist confirmed.

"It's very serious. But she's hanging in there," says spokeswoman Linda Dozoretz. Clooney, 74, initially underwent cancer surgery at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota in January to remove the upper lobe of her left lung. A series of infections delayed her recovery, and she remained hospitalized until May. The singer-actress and aunt of George Clooney was finally given the okay to return home to Beverly Hills after doctors deemed her fit enough to resume singing and performing.

However, Clooney, a longtime smoker, checked back into the hospital after relapsing earlier this month. Her publicist says Clooney returned home from the hospital about two or three weeks ago.

No further information on her condition was available, according to Dozoretz, who did note that Clooneys family - including her husband, dancer Dante Di Paolo, actor Miguel Ferrer (her son with first husband José Ferrer) and her brother (and George's father), Nick - has been by her side.

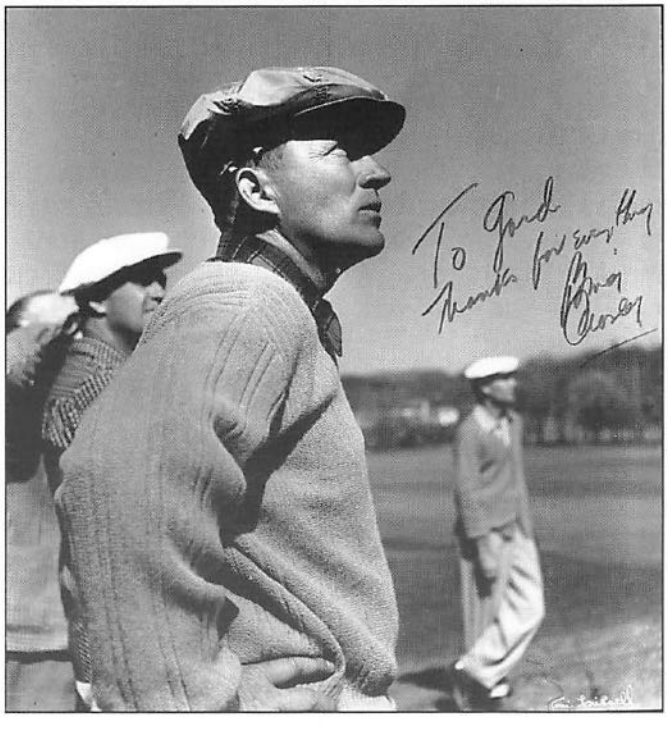
Our thoughts are with Rosemary's family. A full obituary will appear in our Winter edition.

THE MAKING OF "THE CROSBY YEARS"

by Gord Atkinson

In the summer of 1974 I received an invitation from Bing's brother, Larry, to spend a day with him at the Crosby offices on North Robertson Blvd. in Beverly Hills. It was just prior to my first visit with Bing at his Hillsboro home. It was an opportunity to do additional research for my radio series, "The Crosby Years".

Upon my arrival I was met by Bing's secretary, Lillian Murphy. My attention quickly focussed on a picture which hung by her desk. It had been taken during a golf tournament. Bing had a great profile and it was never more pronounced than in this candid photo. I admired it so much that Lillian went searching for another copy. She found one, which she kindly gave to me and told me it was her favourite picture of "the boss". When I met with Bing a few days later it was the first photo I had him sign. (Incidentally, the golfer standing in front of Bing is the great Ben Hogan.)



In 1945 I first visited the Crosby offices, then located in their own building on the Sunset Strip in Hollywood. As an 18 year-old Canadian soldier I had the privilege that day of meeting Bing's father. A few years ago, I went looking for the original office building. It no longer stood alone, but was part of a crowded block of stores and offices. However, the Crosby name was still visible at the entrance.

Because of the encouragement and efforts of Larry Crosby, I was able to realize my dream of producing in 1975 an authorized radio anthology for

Bing's 50th anniversary in show business. Now the entire series is being updated and re-issued on digitally re-mastered CDs for ICC collectors.

Following the release of Parts 1 and 2 of "A Crosby Christmas" and Parts 1 and 2 of "The Crosby Years" we are pleased to release, with this issue of BING, Parts 3 and 4 of our award-winning radio series. These two new releases from "The Crosby Years" follow Bing's career from his last engagements with Paul Whiteman to his arrival in New York and Hollywood. In his own words he recalls his early years in radio and films and remembers fondly his recordings of the 1930s, including his enduring theme song. His two closest friends, Phil Harris and Bob Hope, are among the special celebrity guests.

It is our intention to release all 14 programs by the end of 2003 to coincide with the 100th anniversary of Bing's birth. Two CDs will be released with each issue of BING. My sincere thanks to the ICC members who are collecting this limited edition of "The Crosby Years". Thank you for your kind comments. My special thanks to Malcolm Macfarlane for his continuing support and encouragement.

Gord Atkinson

(Editor: As before, a separate insert regarding these episodes of "The Crosby Years" is enclosed for UK readers, and US and Canadian members can obtain the CDs from:
"The Crosby Years"
Anderson Publishing
102 Boyce Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario, K2B 6J2
Canada
[Phone: (613) 721-0811] For U.S. and Canadian orders please note that payment can be made by check, Visa or Mastercard. The new secure e-mail address for orders is: admin@anderpub.com

The cost remains at $22.00 U.S. for 2 CDs and $12.00 for one CD which includes postage. Canadian purchasers should pay CAN$30.00 for 2 CDs and CAN$16.00 for one CD.

The earlier offers of the 2-part "A Crosby Christmas" and parts one and two of "The Crosby Years" remain available.)

Bing Can't Walk

Amazing as it seems, this is the title of a song on the new album HOLIDAY IN DIRT by former Wall of Voodoo frontman Stan Ridgeway. The Amazon review states that "Bing Can't Walk" is narrated by a mob enforcer and was actually inspired by a stage accident in which an ageing Bing Crosby broke his legs. Not entirely correct, as when Bing fell off the stage at Pasadena in 1977, he injured his back but never let the facts stand in the way of a good story! Can there be such a thing as bad publicity? Whatever your answer, it takes me on nicely to the next item.

Replica Bing Crosby Casket on Display

For the Memorial Day weekend, May 25-27, 2002, the Heritage Funeral Home in Spokane, Washington displayed a Bing Crosby replica casket. Approximately 1500 visitors came to see the casket in the funeral home's chapel. Crosby music played throughout the funeral home and Crosby movies played on a big screen television in the reception room. This was the third year in a row that a replica casket of a distinguished person was available for public viewing by Heritage Funeral Home. Previously, the caskets of Abraham Lincoln and George Washington had been on display. The Batesville Casket Company of Batesville, Indiana provided the authentic replica casket. A spray of pink roses added to the authenticity because that resembled what adorned Bing's casket at the time of his burial at Holy Cross Cemetery in Los Angeles. Stephanie Plowman, Special Collections Librarian at Gonzaga University, created a display of memorabilia from the Crosbyana Collection for this event.

An unexpected promotion of Bing's image but well done Stephanie for capitalising on the event.

Les Paul has seen it all in his 87 years

This was the heading to an article on the CNN web site on May 28 and it contained some nice words from Les Paul about Bing. Let me quote:

" . . By that era, Paul was already an in-demand sideman; indeed, Crosby featured the Les Paul Trio on several of his radio shows and helped finance Paul's engineering work. His guitar style -- lightning-quick note picking, double-time rhythms and true-blue soul - was heavily influenced by Reinhardt, but he credits Crosby with teaching him about timing, phrasing, and preparation.

"To work with him was one of the most enjoyable learning experiences," says Paul. Crosby, he says, "didn't say it, he did it - one time only. Unless he blew the lyrics, he did one take." Musicians had to be ready with the arrangement and have the song down, he adds, or they wouldn't be back.

Paul says he was present at the first meeting between Crosby and Sinatra in the early 1940s, and sat between the two for an Armed Forces radio broadcast. Sinatra was the teen idol; Crosby, the established veteran.

"I'm looking at two of the most powerful people in the business," recalls Paul of the experience. And though Sinatra was riding a

wave of popularity, "you knew he was nervous to be with the master, Bing," says Paul. "He idolized Bing.". .

Another nice press cutting was sent to us by Gord Atkinson. The Ottawa Citizen newspaper of April 24 had an interview with golf legend Sandra Post which included the following:

> Aside from winning the big tournaments, Ms Post's favourite memories involve the fun of the game. She loves the tournaments that mix professionals and amateurs. She played with partners such as Bing Crosby and Bob Hope. She describes them as men who were as much fun on the course as they seemed to be in their movies. The two Hollywood icons never passed up a chance when in front of a camera to take shots at each other's golf skills. If you were a betting person, says Ms. Post, you would have bet on the late Mr. Crosby. The word she uses to describe his game is "terrific."

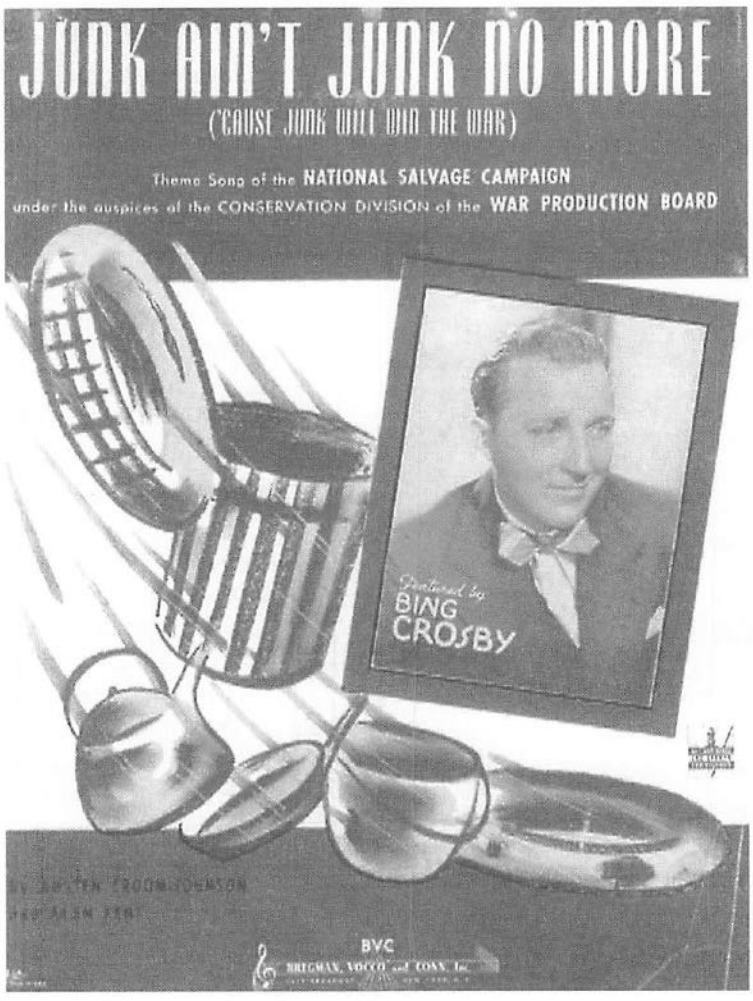
Legends of Swing

We mentioned this UK touring show in BING #129 and I was delighted to hear from Ken Heason, George Patmore and John Benstead that it is still thriving. George saw it advertised for April 26 in Shrewsbury and Ken just missed it at Berwick-upon-Tweed in northern England on May 4. It's described as "A tribute to the music & songs of Nat, Ella & Bing. A nostalgic night of music, song and anecdote featuring Johnny Wiltshire and the Jazz All-stars". Sounds to be well worth catching if it passes your way.

Turning to the USA, in our last issue we mentioned that a show called BING! Cherries was being prepared for an off-Broadway showing. Sadly we understand that the production folded without reaching an audience.

The mystery of Bing's beads

Peter Howard forwarded a cutting from the Liverpool (UK) Daily Post of March 1 which had a full page article about some Rosary beads donated by Bing to help raise funds for the rebuilding of Holy Cross Church on Standish Street. It seems that the beads were raffled in 1949 and won by a Mary Kildare. The local community is having a major cel oration next year and they would very much to display the beads at the event. The article in the newspaper was an appeal to try to find them. Anyone with information should contact Ron Formby on 0151-298-1544. It was a nice bit of exposure for Bing.


JUNK AIN'T JUNK NO MORE
('CAUSE JUNK WILL WIN THE WAR)
Theme Song of the NATIONAL SALVAGE CAMPAIGN
under the auspices of the CONSERVATION DIVISION of the WAR PRODUCTION BOARD
Featured by
BING
CROSBY
BVC

BING'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATED ON CABLE TELEVISION

Two national cable networks in the U.S. feature so-called "classic films" as their major programming, the American Movie Classics channel ("Hollywood films from the 1930's to the 1970's") and Turner Classic Movies ("commercial free classic movies"). In past years, a number of Bing's films have been shown quite regularly by both of these cable systems. Unfortunately, in an effort to appeal to younger audiences (an occupational disease affecting almost every television network and independent station in the U.S. these days), American Movie Classics has begun utilizing mostly films from the 1950-1970 period - many of which are far from being "classics" by any stretch of the imagination - and seldom broadcasts anything from the 1930's or the 1940's any more. As a result, Bing's films have largely disappeared from this cable channel, which made no effort to recognize Bing's birthday this year.

On the other hand, Turner Classic Movies (owned by media mogul Ted Turner) did very well by Bing this time around, everything considered. First, "GOING MY WAY" was shown on Sunday, April 28th, making an unusual appearance outside of the Christmas holiday season, when we usually see it every year. And then, on Thursday, May 2nd, the Turner network ran a five-film festival of Bing's movies, beginning with the rarely-seen "GOING HOLLYWOOD", followed by "GOING MY WAY", "THE BELLS OF ST. MARY'S", "A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT", and ending with "HIGH SOCIETY" - a 10 hour marathon of uninterrupted Crosby favorites, each complete and uncut and without the annoying commercial breaks that we are forced to suffer through on almost all other television networks.

Needless to say, it was a great pleasure to see this kind of tribute paid to Bing in this day and age. And we can only hope that it might be a preview of better things to come for Bing's 100th birthday celebration next year in May 2003.

MAJOR MAIL ORDER COMPANY FEATURES BING CD

Fellow ICC member Ernest Sutkowski of Saddle River, New Jersey alerted me to the welcome news that the recent reissue of Bing's "Fancy Meeting You Here" duet album with Rosemary Clooney (made in 1958 for RCA Victor Records) was chosen by a major American mail order company, Columbia House, 1400 North Fruitridge Avenue, Terre Haute, IN 47811, USA (www.Columbiahouse.com) as the "Easy Listening Selection of the Month" in its catalog for April 2002. Even though the CD reissue by BMG Music (which now owns the RCA Victor catalog) has previously been available in music stores throughout the country, the selection by Columbia House will result in much larger sales to Crosby fans who might fear to venture into the stores that are so thoroughly dominated by rap and rock and other types of "modern music" these days.

And who knows? If "Fancy Meeting You Here" sales become impressive enough, we might even hope for similar reissues by BMG Music of Bing's other long-lost RCA albums, such as "Bing With A Beat" (which has only appeared on CD in Japan) and "How The West Was Won" (which has yet to appear on CD anywhere in the world). My thanks to Ernie Sutkowski for this bit of encouraging news from the American music scene.

COLUMBIA HOUSE
Easy Listening Selection of the Month
Bing Crosby & Rosemary Clooney
Fancy Meeting You Here
Remastered
Take a tour around the world with one of the greatest musical match-ups of all time! With skillful arrangements by "The Merry Maestro" Billy May, Bing and Rosie duet on a dozen standards, including (I'd Like To Be) On A Slow Boat To China; You Came A Long Way From St. Louis; It Happened In Monterey; I Can't Get Started; Hindustan; Isle Of Capri and more.
And it gets even better! This remastered edition features six essential bonus duets: Der Bingle teams up with Jo Stafford on four previously unreleased tracks, including Ol' Man River and a medley of songs from "Fancy Meeting You Here," while Bob Hope joins Clooney on two more.
Bing and Rosie made absolute magic together—don't miss this chance to fall under their spell. (RCA Bluebird) 1958
NEW!
331165 T 18.98
ORDER NOW to get your Selection of the Month
as part of this month's special sale!
Just fill out your order card or respond online @ Columbiahouse.com

JIM LOWE AND COMPANY SALUTE BING

Jim Lowe is one of the deans of radio broadcasting in the New York area who, in the "good old days", featured a Crosby Corner program on station WNEW. For many years, WNEW was the leading New York home of recordings by the big bands and popular vocalists of the day, and Bing always was a major star on this station. Because of the many changes in radio broadcasting over the past decade, WNEW no longer plays "our kind of music", but Jim Lowe is still going strong, nevertheless.

These days, Jim Lowe headlines a series of special broadcasts that are recorded live at the Museum of Television and Radio "in the heart of New York City" for subsequent re-broadcast by radio stations throughout the U.S. and Canada, and worldwide transmission via the Internet. These programs feature special guests and live performers, as well as original recordings by artists from the golden years of popular music.

In early January of this year, fellow ICC member Harvey Sheirr of New York City was able to attend the recording of a special Jim Lowe salute to Bing, which was subsequently broadcast during the first week of February on stations around the country. Thanks to Harvey, I was able to obtain a copy of this broadcast from the producer, so that I could review it for this issue of BING.

Special guests for the program were Skitch Henderson (who was long associated with Bing's Philco radio show back in the 1940's) and an 18-year-old New York singer and pianist named Peter Cincotti, plus a small house combo called the Smith Street Society Jazz Band. Jim Lowe was master of ceremonies for the program and talked with his guests in a relaxed, informal manner, as well as performing a very creditable version of 'Learn To Croon' himself during the show. The entire hour was a pleasant salute to Bing which featured several other Crosby songs performed live by Peter Cincotti and the jazz group, as well as selected recordings by the Old Groaner.

Jim Lowe opened the program with his own version of "Learn To Croon", and followed with his characterization of Bing as a super star and a world figure, especially during the Depression and World War II, but who always remained a nonchalant, down-home individual as far as the public was concerned. After a few remarks from his two guests, Jim Lowe played Bing's Decca recording of "San Fernando Valley", which he introduced as a "number one hit from the 1940's", and this was followed by a very pleasant arrangement of "Dinah" by the jazz group (composed of a clarinet, trombone, piano and tuba - if my ears weren't playing tricks on me). Jim Lowe then played Bing's Brunswick recording of "You're Getting To Be A Habit With Me" (made in 1933 with Guy Lombardo and His Royal Canadians), following which he and Skitch Henderson discussed Bing's early career and his long association with Jack Kapp at both Brunswick and Decca Records in the 1930's and 1940's, including Kapp's decision to record the unusual combination of Bing and Lombardo. Skitch jokingly said that he wondered if today's radio listeners were really interested in such trivia, but Jim Lowe's New York studio audience certainly seemed to enjoy hearing his comments.

Young Peter Cincotti then played and sang an up-tempo version of "Birth Of The Blues", but came across as more of a Sinatra stylist than a Crosby one. Nevertheless, the song was identified as having been one of Bing's Decca recordings. Peter later also sang "Let's Do It" (which Bing had recorded with Paul Whiteman) in a similar early-Sinatra manner.

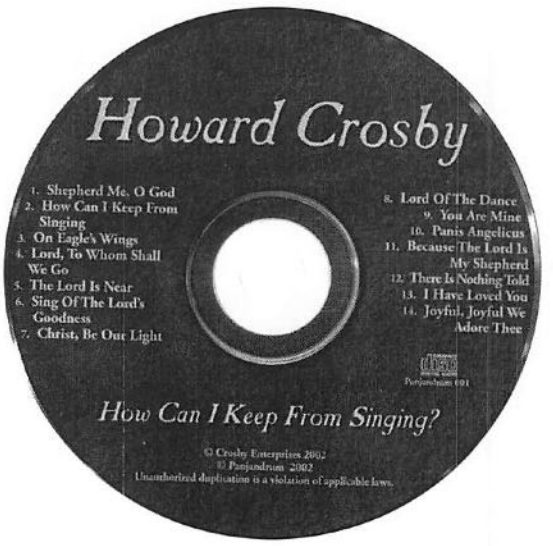
Skitch Henderson later described how he had first met Bing, when Skitch was serving as a rehearsal pianist for Dolores Hope (Bob's wife) in Hollywood who, at the time, was still singing professionally during a "fallow period" in Bob Hope's own career. Skitch said that Bing "sort of adopted me", and that he often accompanied Bing at charity performances that never received any publicity, before beginning to work with him on the Philco radio shows. Jim Lowe remarked that Skitch also had played for Frank Sinatra in later years, and asked Skitch what that experience had been like. After a significant pause, Skitch said that working with Frank was - "different" - which provoked a lot of studio laughter. Jim Lowe then played a transcribed excerpt of Bing and Frank from an Armed Forces radio program during World War II, singing a parody medley of their song hits of the time, complete with squeals from Frank's ever-present bobby-soxers in the audience. This was followed by Bing and Bob Hope's recorded version of "Nothing In Common".

Afterward, Skitch Henderson told the story of how Bing gave him his nickname, which first had been "Sketch". Bing often asked for him as "the sketch kid" in those days, to run through a song with him before a broadcast, and later told him "to get his name straightened out" if he wanted to be a success in the entertainment business (I believe Henderson's real name was Lyle Cedric). Bing added that no one

would have ever paid much attention to him if he had remained "Harry", instead of becoming "Bing". Skitch said that Bing even nagged him to have his name changed legally to "Skitch", which he eventually did.

This very interesting program was closed by Jim Lowe playing Bing's 1931 Brunswick recording of "Where The Blue Of The Night Meets The Gold Of The Day". All in all, it was an excellent tribute to Bing on American radio, which is a rarity these days. One of the most impressive aspects of the show was the seamless way in which the live performances and dialogue were integrated with Bing's actual recordings. The balance among the different elements was done quite effectively, which is not always the case with this kind of radio broadcast. My congratulations to Jim Lowe on the quality of this program, and I hope that he might include others about Bing in the future.

By the way, I brought the forthcoming Hofstra University Conference on Bing's life and career to the attention of Jim Lowe and Skitch Henderson, and they both were subsequently invited to participate in the conference. Let's hope they will be able to do so.


Howard Crosby
1. Shepherd Me, O God
2. How Can I Keep From Singing
3. On Eagle's Wings
4. Lord, To Whom Shall We Go
5. The Lord Is Near
6. Sing Of The Lord's Goodness
7. Christ, Be Our Light
8. Lord Of The Dance
9. You Are Mine
10. Panis Angelicus
11. Because The Lord Is My Shepherd
12. There Is Nothing Told
13. I Have Loved You
14. Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee
How Can I Keep From Singing?

ANOTHER SINGING CROSBY

Howard Crosby of Walla Walla, Washington (southwest of Spokane) is Bing's nephew and the son of Ted Crosby, one of Bing's older brothers. An active member of the ICC for a number of years, Howard has served as a vocalist with several parish choirs throughout the Pacific Northwest, as well as giving live performances of modern and classical church music.

Recently, Howard sent me a compact disc which he made for church fund-raising purposes in the area. The CD contains fourteen religious songs ranging from almost-Hebraic settings of familiar psalms to a hymn-like version of Beethoven's "Ode To Joy". The CD is entitled "How Can I Keep From Singing?"

On this recording, Howard Crosby is accompanied by a small string and percussion group on most of the tracks, plus a wind trio of saxes and trumpet on a few others. He also is supported by a vocal trio on occasion. I found this compact disc to be a thoroughly enjoyable listening experience. Howard's voice is clear, with excellent enunciation, and he sings each song in a straightforward manner without ornamentation. (Sound like any other singer that we are familiar with?) Howard has a pleasant, light baritone, which occasionally reaches into the tenor range. My favorite tracks on this CD are the modern hymn, "On Eagle's Wings", the traditional Shaker song, "Lord Of The Dance", and a classical setting of "Panis Angelicus", whose lyrics are credited to St. Thomas Aquinus.

But, you may ask, does Howard Crosby sound like Bing? The answer is that he doesn't reflect Bing's timbre in his own voice. And the quiet, simple settings of Howard's recordings are quite different from Bing's well-known "BELOVED HYMNS" album that he made for Decca Records back in 1949. Nevertheless, this is a delightful album of religious songs which I am pleased to have in my collection. If other ICC members are interested in obtaining a copy, they may do so by sending a contribution of $15.00 to the Walla Walla Catholic Schools, in care of Howard Crosby at P.O. Box 2056, Walla Walla, Washington 99362.

Howard is looking forward to meeting other ICC members at the Hofstra University Conference on Bing in November.

HOFSTRA CONFERENCE UPDATE

By the time that ICC members are reading this report in mid-August, plans for the Hofstra University Conference on Bing's influence on American culture and his place within the international entertainment world will be more completely established than at present. However, I

would like to take this opportunity to give everyone a general update on projected conference activities and participants, so that you will have a better idea of the scope of this unprecedented review of Bing's influence on our lives and times.

Since my participation in the planning meeting on the Hofstra campus back in December (BING #130, pages 14-15), considerable progress has been made in scheduling presentations and arranging for leading participants in the conference. I would like to thank Dr. Ruth Prigozy, Bing Crosby Conference Director, and Natalie Datlof, Director of Conferences and Symposia at Hofstra University, for providing me with the following information.

SCHEDULED EVENTS

The Bing Crosby Conference will run for three days beginning on the morning of Thursday, November 14, 2002, and concluding in the late afternoon of Saturday, November 16, 2002. Formal presentations will take place throughout the three-day period featuring academicians, well-known figures from the entertainment world, and Crosby fans (including a number of ICC members). In addition to some 50 papers on various aspects of Bing's life and career which have been accepted for the conference, numerous panel discussions also will take place on special topics. There also will be film and musical presentations, as well as an exhibit of Crosby memorabilia at the Hofstra University Library during the conference.

A gala banquet will take place on Friday evening (rather than on Saturday evening, as I previously reported). The banquet will feature fellow ICC member Rich Little as Master of Ceremonies, and a special performance during the evening by Tony Martin, who will sing and offer personal comments about Bing. A number of prominent guests are expected to attend the banquet.

SCHEDULED PARTICIPANTS

In addition to Rich Little and Tony Martin, participants in the Hofstra Conference are expected to include authors Gary Giddins and Will Friedwald, musical directors Buddy Bregman and Nick Perito, musical producer Ken Barnes, radio and television broadcasters Joe Franklin, Jack Ellsworth and Jay Diamond, as well as various personalities from the New York and Hollywood film and music worlds yet to be confirmed.

SCHEDULED TOPICS

Among the topics which will be discussed by individuals and special panels at various times during the three-day period of the Hofstra Conference are expected to be the following:

"The Cultural and Historical Background of the Crosby Era"
"Bing Crosby and Other Singers (His Contemporaries)"
"Bing and Gonzaga University"
"Working With Bing"
"Arrangers and Conductors of Bing Crosby"
"Radio Broadcasters and Bing Crosby"
"Bing and the Hollywood Years"
"Bing and Jazz"
"Bing the Actor"
"Bing the Vocalist"
"Bing Crosby and World War II"
"Bing in Great Britain and Australia"
"Bing's Television Career"
"Bing and the Girl Vocalists"
"Bing and Louis Armstrong"
"Bing and Fred Astaire"
"Bing and Frank Sinatra"
"The Irish Connection"
"White Christmas"
"Fans Speak of Bing"
"Remembrances of Bing Crosby"

C)NFERENCE FEES AND REGISTRATION PROGRAM

There will be a registration fee for the conference, which will cover the cost of transportation between the Hofstra campus and the official hotels and admission to all events except the gala banquet. The banquet will require a separate fee. Details of all scheduled events and fees will be included in the official registration program which will be distributed about mid-August by Hofstra University to all expected participants. A final program brochure, with specific information on the times and locations for all events, will be available upon arrival at the Hofstra campus registration desk in November.

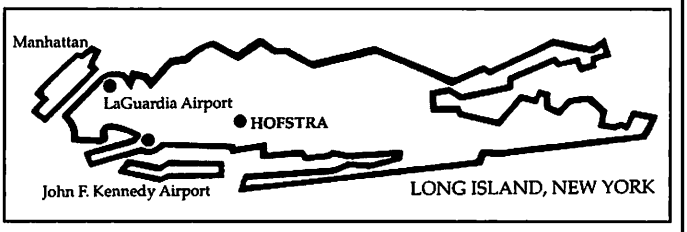
CONFERENCE HOTELS

There have been changes regarding the official hotels for the Hofstra Conference since my previous report in BING #130. The following have now been confirmed as the hotels which should be used by ICC members planning to attend. Please identify yourself as a participant in the Bing Crosby Conference at Hofstra University when making hotel reservations. Scheduled transportation will be provided between these hotels and the Hofstra campus throughout the three days of the conference.

LONG ISLAND MARRIOTT HOTEL AND CONFERENCE CENTER
101 James Doolittle Boulevard
Uniondale, New York 11553
Telephone: (516) 794-3800
Room rate: $155 per night, single or double

WINGATE INN
821 Stewart Avenue
Garden City, New York 11530
Telephone: (516) 705-9000
Room rate: $135 per night, single or double

RED ROOF INN
699 Dibblee Drive
Westbury, New York 11590
Telephone: (516) 794-2555
Room rate: $99 per night, single or double



SEE YOU AT HOFSTRA!

All ICC members, and members of other Crosby clubs, who can attend the Hofstra University Conference on Bing Crosby are very much encouraged to do so. My wife, Laura, and I will be traveling from Virginia to New York for this once-in-a-lifetime event, and we hope to meet you there.

F. B. (Wig) Wiggins
June 22, 2002

Spokane, May 3, 2003

As we went to press, arrangements were also being made to hold a major celebration in Spokane to mark the centenary of Bing's birth. Judy Schmid is liaising closely with Stephanie Plowman at Gonzaga University to draw matters together. Sponsors are being sought and it seems that the Spokane civic authorities will declare May 3, 2003 "Bing Crosby Day".

At present we are looking at holding a reception in the late afternoon of Friday, May 2 at the Bing Crosby Alumni House (Bing's childhood home) following which we shall visit the Crosbyana Room in the old Crosby library on the Gonzaga campus. The next morning (May 3) we are planning a tour of Spokane which would also pick up many of the places frequented by Bing in his youth.

The major celebratory event would take place on the Saturday afternoon and evening in the banqueting suite at the Westcoast Grand Hotel, Spokane. Gord Atkinson (who emceed the event involving the unveiling of Bing's statue at Gonzaga in 1981) has kindly agreed to act as MC and it is hoped that Gary Giddins and possibly some Crosby family members and other guests will be able to address us. It is also hoped to show rare Crosby films and have a display of Crosby memorabilia. Other activities will be organised building on those employed at our Leeds meeting each year and at Hobie Wilson's annual banquets.

All of this is, of course, very vague and tentative at this stage as there is still much to do to complete our planning. Unfortunately there are other major events on in Spokane that weekend and hotel space may be at a premium. Stephanie Plowman has made a provisional booking for 50 rooms at the Westcoast Grand Hotel, 303 West Northriver Drive, Spokane, WA 99201 and single / double rooms will cost $86 each. Triple / Quadruple rooms will cost $96 each. Quote "Crosby Centennial Celebration" to get these special rates. The Hotel's telephone number is 1-800-325-4000 or direct to (509) 326-8000 (Fax: 509-325-7329) and email sales@westcoasthotels.com/.

Before we dare make a financial commitment in respect of the rooms and banqueting suite, we need to know that members will be willing to attend. Can we ask for a written commitment (email and fax acceptable) of the intention to attend quoting names, home address in full plus telephone number, from as many of you as possible either to me (details on inside front cover) or to Judy Schmid at Koenig Advertising, 309 South Franklin St., Syracuse, NY 13202 (phone: 315-475-1603, Fax: 315-475-1613, Email: judy@koenig-adpr.com). This will give us some idea of numbers who may attend and enable us to make definite arrangements. We fully understand that circumstances may eventually prevent people attending but it's the intention we wish to assess now.

Malcolm Macfarlane

The Crosby Estate

Here's news of a superb new real estate development which will perpetuate Bing's name nicely in southern California. Let's quote extracts from the developers press release.

"The Crosby Estate at Rancho Santa Fe is a luxurious new gated community named after Bing. The Crosby Estate and The Crosby National Golf Course, includes a 722-acre community offering 443 residences including attached villas, private individual homes and custom homesites, surrounded by an 18-hole (par-70, 6,720 yard) private golf course and club. Located within the master plan, the Crosby National Golf Club has been meticulously designed to offer the amenities that discriminating club members desire. The clubhouse will present fine dining and social activities along sweeping golf course views. The club offers swimming pools, five tennis courts, driving range and a fitness center. Price range for properties in The Crosby Estate is from $750,000 to over $2,000,000. The lot sizes range from less than one-quarter acre to nearly one

and one-half acres.

Entrance to The Crosby Estate is through the gates and across the spectacular 340-foot bridge over the San Dieguito River. . . Homeowners within The Crosby Estate at Rancho Santa Fe will enjoy the finest of private country club living. The community will maintain 24-hour gate guards, offer sweeping fairway and territorial views, and include several private parks, walking and hiking paths as well as a picturesque lake park. . . . The site is approximately five miles east of Interstate 5 and five miles west of Interstate 15. The master-planned community will offer architecture, design and landscaping that will blend with the regionally historic styles of Rancho Santa Fe."

You know where I'll be living if the Lotto comes up! What better place could there be to produce the magazine? Bing certainly started something in the area as another press release in June confirmed:

"RANCHO SANTA FE, Calif. - The schools are outstanding, there's almost no crime and the sun shines 320 days a year. Only residents can join the community's world-class golf club. But only the rich need apply.

Rancho Santa Fe, a town of 5,000 people 30 miles north of San Diego, is the nation's wealthiest among communities of 1,000 households or more, according to census figures released yesterday. The per capita income of more than $113,000 puts Rancho Santa Fe ahead of Atherton and Woodside, both near San Francisco; Palm Beach, Fla.; and Bloomfield Hills, Mich., census figures show. No Washington-state cities were among the top 10.

Rancho Santa Fe also was the most expensive place to buy a house in the United States over the past year. The median single-family home price is $1.7 million, according to DataQuick Information Systems of San Diego."

It's nice to dream!

Bing On Jeopardy

Our enthusiastic member Carmela Amari from New York was quick off the mark with her note on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum bulletin board on May 23. This is what she had to say:

Did anyone catch the game show Jeopardy tonight? There was a Category all about our man called Bada Bing! I am proud to say I answered all the questions on Bing. They were easy ones!

In response to a query she continued:

The contestants did not do well in the "Bada Bing" category. The two men who were on didn't answer one question on Bing and the woman who was on the show only got about two answers right. One question was "What was the sequel to "Going My Way" where Bing played Father O'Malley again" [It was something like that]. Her answer was "Bells Around Their Toes". Sad but true. I thought everyone would know the answer to that one. Another one that she got wrong asked something like this, "In what movie do Bing and Danny Kaye sing, "We'll follow the old man. . ." Her response was "Holiday Inn".

The Road to Hillsborough

The article bearing this title in our last issue created some interest and a query was raised about Bing's political tendencies. Bing was always somewhat reticent on the subject as he did not think it was appropriate for an entertainer to influence others to vote one way or the other. However, he had undoubtedly Republican sympathies and it was interesting to see the following letter from Richard Nixon which we now reproduce.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 4, 1972

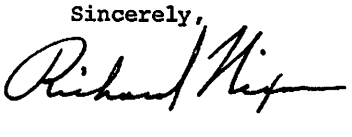
Dear Kathy and Bing:

As I look back to our victory of November 7, I realize how much I owe to those who with their talent and support helped us roll up a majority of landslide proportions.

I shall, of course, always be proud of the fact that so many from the entertainment world were willing to play a part in the campaign, and I am especially grateful to you for your efforts. You may be assured that over the next four years I shall do everything possible to make a record which all Americans, regardless of party, can view with pride as we celebrate our nation's 200th Birthday in 1976.

With appreciation and best wishes,

Sincerely,



Mr. and Mrs. Bing Crosby
200 Jackling
Hillsboro, California 94010

Also, we have recently seen a circular letter that went out under Bing's signature in late 1969 or early 1970 which must have reflected some of Bing's true feelings. It reads as follows:

Dear Fellow American,

Please forget that I'm an entertainer. Right now, I'm just one American inviting you, another American, to join in a last great "Crusade" for our

late President Eisenhower.

It all started some time ago when I heard about Radio of Free Asia, and about General Eisenhower's personal interest in its work. Now, I'm no expert on world politics. Far from it. To me, Red China seemed a long way from my home in Hollywood - just as you probably feel it's pretty far away from where you live. But suddenly I realised that I, personally, could help bring Ike's dream of world peace closer to reality. And that you could do the same.

You see, Ike knew that the way to win peace was to let people know the truth about each other. So, to bring the truth about America to Asia's millions, he became Honorary President of Radio of Free Asia -- even suggested their motto "Bridge of Truth", that so clearly pictures its purpose. In three years Radio of Free Asia has broadcast over 3,500 programs deep into Red China and North Korea telling the story of America. . . its people. . the freedom that is ours under Democracy. Transmitted mostly at night, these broadcasts reach millions of people who are known to "tune in to truth" secretly in their homes.

So now, in memory of Ike - and because his name and ideals are known even behind the "Bamboo Curtain" - Radio of Free Asia is planning a series of programs of six chapters, each one fifteen minutes in length, to be called "EISENHOWER: PORTRAIT OF AN AMERICAN HERO". These special programs will be much more that a tribute to General Eisenhower. By broadcasting his life story, ROFA will be able to tell, in a unique and special way, the truth about America and American values of freedom and democracy. And this is why I'm writing to you. Without your help, this special series cannot be produced.

To write, produce and broadcast this special Eisenhower series for 40 days into every corner of Communist Asia will take a minimum of $118,500, over and above ROFA's present operating budget. To tell Freedom's story in this unique way will take "sponsors". . . people like you. . . Americans who will give to get the job done. Your dollars, given now, will provide the funds Radio of Free Asia needs to produce and broadcast this Eisenhower series widely. . . repeatedly. . . through the "Bamboo Curtain" into Red China and North Korea. With your help this series can bring the truth about Democracy to the captive millions now "brainwashed" by communist propaganda into dangerous, unreasoning hatred for America. Won't you join with us at this crossroad of history to help "sponsor" this "EISENHOWER: PORTRAIT OF AN AMERICAN HERO" series? Won't you take a minute - now - to write a check (tax deductible) for $100.00. . . $50.00. . . $25.00. . . as much as you can afford . . . and mail it back to Radio of Free Asia headquarters in the enclosed envelope?

You will be aiding the cause of peace to which General Eisenhower dedicated his life. And you'll be helping to build his "Bridge of Truth" which is one of our best hopes - yours, mine and the world's - for lasting peace.

"I have always loved my country", were General Eisenhower's last words. What better way to show your love of both him - and America - than by giving to this cause he held so dear. You know what the stakes are. You have my invitation. These may well be the most important broadcasts in ROFA's history. Won't you join us now in this last Eisenhower "Crusade"?

Sincerely,

Bing Crosby

P. S. Enclosed is a copy of the telegram which Ambassador Yang, Chairman of the Board of Radio of Free Asia, sent to ROFA's Operations Director. This telegram effectively underscores the importance, and the tremendous need for funds for the special Eisenhower project.

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries
Please send all advertisements to the Editor

Greg Van Beek, 3006 Emerald Street, West Bend, Wisconsin 53095, USA. e-mail: tvanbeek@execpc.com

Wanted:

Am looking for a photograph of singer Al Bowlly. Preferably 8 x 10. Must be posed behind a microphone. Will pay for an original photograph or good quality reprint, or trade. Please contact me if you can help.

Arthur Blood, 597 Osmaston Rd., Derby DE24 8NE, UK

Arthur has produced a new stamp (see below) plus matching key ring for members' use. Stamps cost £3 for 20 including postage to UK members. USA members can order from Wig Wiggins, price $5 for 20. The key ring costs £2.50.

Also Arthur has produced a coloured A4 sized (approx. 8" by 11.5") collage of the stamps he has produced in recent time and a reduced size copy of this is shown in the next column. The collage has been produced as a limited issue of 250 and costs £3 for UK members and $5 for US and Canadian readers. Contact Arthur direct in the UK and Wig in the USA and Canada. The collage would look lovely in a frame.

Mrs. M. Didymus, 120 Francis Avenue, Southsea, Hants PO4 0ER, UK

Mrs. Didymus is the widow of broadcaster Gerry Didymus and she has to tackle the task of disposing of her late husband's Bing collection. She has a large number of Bing CDs sitting on shelves. Will those interested please contact her direct for details.

Festival Films, 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, MN 55331, USA (Tel: [952] 470-2172, e-mail: FesFilms@aol.com)

Ron Hall's company has produced two excellent new videos (NTSC only) of Bing's TV shows from 1961 and 1964. See the separate section in the magazine titled "DVD & Video Corner" for full details. Festival Films has many other Bing videos (NTSC only) available plus many Bing film poster reproductions. Contact Ron for details or look at the web site at www.fesfilms.com

Keel Row Books, 11 Fenwick Terrace, Preston Rd., North Shields, Tyne & Wear, NE29 0LU, UK (Tel. 0191-296-0664, if phoning from outside UK dial 0044 -191-296-0664)

The proprietor, Bob Cook, was a major purchaser at the John Joyce auction which was described in our last issue. He has many copies from "The Crosby Collection" series of books by Fred Reynolds, a copy of "The Road to Bing Crosby", several copies of "The Road to Hollywood", copies of the Ken Barnes book "The Crosby Years" and at least one copy of "The Story of Bing Crosby" by Ted Crosby. He also bought many records and some sheet music. Contact him with details of your wants.

Madeline Williams. Allandale, Station Rd., Deganwy, Conwy LL31 9EX, UK

"I was left 350 approximately 78 rpm records of Bing and although I enjoy his singing, I need to sell them. I would really prefer that they went to a fan rather than me selling them separately."

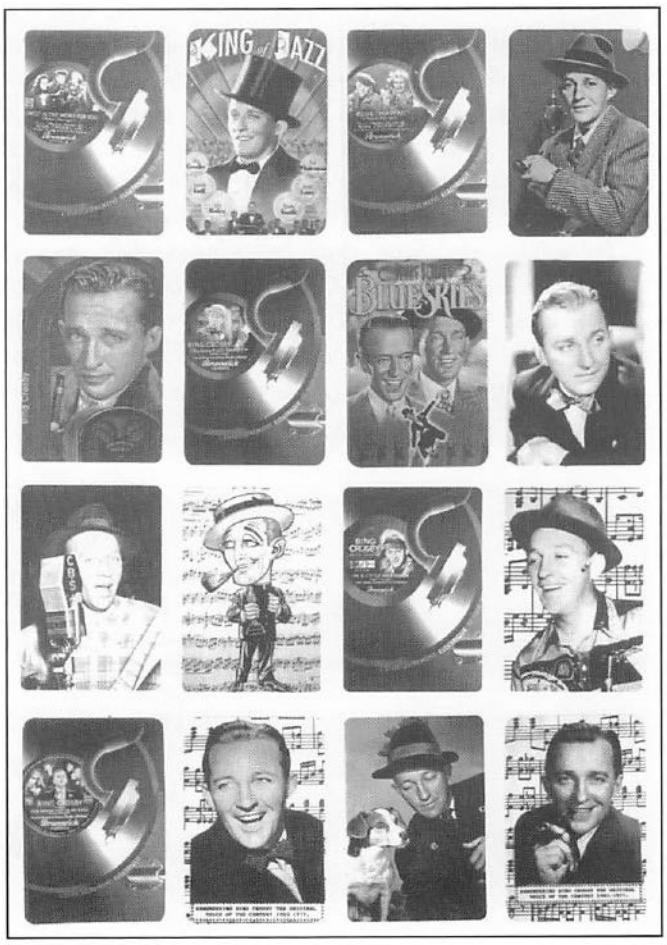
Contact Madeline direct please.

Peter R. Wilson, 13 Etterby Lea Rd., Stanwix, Carlisle, Cumbria CA3 9JW, UK

Peter has the following LPs for sale for £2 (plus postage) each. All are said to be in excellent condition.

Bing Sings Broadway (MCA - MCL 1730)
The Best of Bing (MCA - MCF 2540)
The Best of Bing (MCA - MCL 1607)
I Love You Truly (Coral - CPS 79)
Bing's Magic (Magic - Awe 1)
Bing Goes Latin (MGM 2354-028)
Original Favorites (MCA 202937 -241)

Stan Woodford, 6 Mariam Gardens, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 6QA, UK (tel. 01708 445049)

Stan has on offer many VHS (UK format) video items and film song compilations of Bing that may be of interest. SAE for lists please.

BING BINDERS

Keep your magazines in mint condition by storing them in these specially made binders. They have blue covers with BING in gold on the spine and hold 10 copies, which allow them to either be inserted or removed, yet also open flat for easy reading. Costing £6.99 inc postage, £7.99 to Europe, £8.99 elsewhere, they are available from Ken Mason, 12 Wycomb Grove, Melton Mowbray, Leics. LE13 1EQ

Crosby Clubs Around The World

The ICC is pleased to be associated with the following Crosby organisations.

Bing's Friends And Collectors Society,
Hobie and Cathie Wilson, 236 Andrieux St., Sonoma, California 95476-6909, USA (tel. 707 996 0257 - e-mail Erinssmile@earthlink.net - Web Site address http://home.earthlink.net/~erinssmile/

The club has just celebrated its twentieth anniversary and it issues a sixteen page newsletter every two months. The annual subscription is $12 (USA) and $16 (outside the USA).

Club Crosby, BINGANG
Wayne L. Martin, Editor
435 So. Holmes Ave., Kirkwood, Missouri 63122, USA
(e-mail: ClubCrosby@aol.com)

The club issues a sixty page magazine twice a year. Subscriptions are $12 (USA and Canada) and $18 for Australia, New Zealand and South America. Members in Europe should enrol via Ken Crossland, 9 Arden Drive, Dorridge, Solihull, B93 8LP - subscription £12.

The Victorian Bing Crosby Society
Bob Neate, 22 Pakenham St., Blackburn, Victoria, Australia 3130. (tel. [03] 9877 1983)

The club issues a newsletter every two months and holds regular film nights. Last year they presented "Road to Utopia", "Too Much Harmony" and "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court".

Internet sites:
Bing Crosby Internet Museum:
www.kcmetro.cc.mo.us/~crosby/

This is a wonderful site which carries up-to-date news and has a lively discussion board. Not to be missed by those on the net.

The Immortal Talents of Bing Crosby
http://www.geocities.com/crissi_n/bing.html

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OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES
We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

In Tune International, 10 Collingwood Drive, Mundesley, Norfolk NR11 8JB, UK (phone/fax: 01263 722818, e-mail: gerry.stonestreet@virgin.net)

Described as the magazine for lovers of the golden age of popular music, this excellent periodical contains 40 pages about nostalgic and easy listening music. Subscriptions, which cover six issues, are £16.50 for the UK, £18.60 for Europe and £24 for the rest of the world. Payment can be made by credit card. Highly recommended.

Sinatra Music Society, c/o Margaret Cummings, 36 Hillcrest Rd., Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield B72 1EN, UK (tel: 0121-350-0683)

Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 01 8212418)

Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 13 Sunnyside, Heckmondwike, W. Yorks WF16 0LN, UK (phone: 01924402469)

Members receive four magazines per year. Subs are £7 UK, £10 Europe, $20 US and Japan.

Pat Boone Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 63, Sunderland, SR1 1PN, UK

The Doris Day Society, 31 Kirkfield Rise, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 9DX, UK

The Deanna Durbin Society, c/o Mrs. Jutta Fagan, 13 Mayfair Court, Mayfair Close, The Ave, Beckenham, Kent BR3 5EL, UK

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email:tony@flias.globalnet.co.uk)

The Dean Martin Association, P. O. Box 80, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 1ZR, UK

Andy Williams Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 5, Westerham, Kent TN16 1UE, UK.

Bing on CD ROM?

The Sinatra Music Society magazine 'Perfectly Frank' recently carried an article about a new CD ROM available for £47 in the UK which contains details of all of Frank Sinatra's work over the years. For those of you on the Internet, see www.whereorwhen.site.nl

Wouldn't it be great to have something similar for Bing? The ICC has a lot of the information on computer already and Steven Lewis has a fair bit on his Bing Crosby Internet Museum site too. I posted a note on the Internet Museum discussion board asking if anyone was interested in taking this forward? We could make it an ICC project but if others are interested, we should be very willing to help. My note brought forth a response from "Lee" (note: everyone using the board has a short name which may or not be their real name), as follows:

"One problem, CD-ROM might be out-moded by the time all the time and work goes into it to create. Don't think this system is so well popular with the general public. So who'd buy it? Bing Computer people? That's a very limited audience. It might be better to create a DVD with lots of options one could choose from to get information on Bing. DVDs have lots of menus that are possible to create and then choose whatever info. you're looking for. More people have DVDs than CD-ROM, myself included. I wouldn't know a CD-ROM if I tripped over it. I'm not a computer expert, but it's just my opinion that a possible highly informative DVD might sell to a wider audience. But, hey, when it comes to this subject, I'm the first to admit I'm no Gates."

"Keith" responded:

> "CD ROM is far more common than Lee thinks and is a most convenient medium available to most of us on this board. Great idea Malcolm."

Finally, "Paul Fisher" came in with:

> "I dunno, I kind of agree with Lee; but either way, it's a good idea. Does anybody know if any Bing film clips are in the public domain? I think the Brits may be a little more lenient as to copyright length. . . it would be great to include some video clips of the man in action; and of course audio files. . . just think, all extant radio shows in .mp3 format would easily fit on one side of a DVD!"

Exciting prospects aren't they? We'll keep it in mind and see if anything develops. Finally, another thought on new technology. An Elvis Presley song "A Little Less Conversation" reached the top of the UK charts in June thanks to being used in an advert and a dance music backing being added to it. Can anyone think of a Bing recording which could be used in a similar way? One suggestion by Carmela Amari on the discussion board was 'Pennies from Heaven' and there was a quick response from "Rod" as follows:

> "I heard the Elvis song on radio too. To my ears it sounded like just so much techno noise - with Elvis floundering around in there somewhere. More an ego trip for the DJ who mixed it, than an homage to Elvis. If that's what required to make Bing relevant today, I'd prefer to leave it alone."

Anyone else have any thoughts on this?

BOOKS 'N' BING

1. BING CROSBY - DAY BY DAY

by Malcolm Macfarlane

Published by Scarecrow Press, 4720 Boston Way, Lanham, Maryland 20706, USA.
856 page hardback book ISBN 0-8108-4145-2

I was delighted to read the following review of my book by Gerry Stonestreet in the *In Tune International* magazine for April.

This is a welcome addition to the Crosby library by the editor of 'BING' magazine. As the title suggests, the personal and professional life of Bing is chronicled on virtually a daily basis, backed up by contemporary reviews and news. Telling the story in a factual way without imposing his own view between the subject and the reader, Malcolm Macfarlane has produced a book you won't be able to put down. Adding great interest throughout is a selection of Crosby's letters, which probably reveal the inner man more than any of his public appearances. A reference book to dip into rather than a straightforward biography, the only problem is 'dipping into' is easy enough it's the 'dipping out' that becomes difficult! Like all good reference books, once you start to look up a particular fact, this then sets off other trains of thought and the time flies by. There is a list of recordings at the back of the book in date order, and thus a reference to the date in the main body of the book gives you further details of that particular recording. There is also an index of names referred to in the chronology, so if, to take an obvious example, you wish to look at Bob Hope's involvement with Crosby, just turn to the index and all the relevant dates are displayed. Film and television appearances are also detailed in a separate appendix to round out the picture. There is an incredible amount of data within the covers and Malcolm Macfarlane has clearly laboured long and hard to produce this admirable piece of scholarship. And, of course, don't run away with the idea that this is just for Crosby devotees, it isn't, for what we have here is a virtual history of the American popular music scene, with all its major, and a multitude of minor, players figuring in here somewhere. For that reason I would classify this book as essential reading for everyone with an interest in popular music of the Twentieth Century.

Gerry Stonestreet

(Editor: My grateful thanks to Gerry for his favourable review. I understand that the book is available from both Amazon and Barnes & Noble. Amazon is asking $85, but with free shipping on orders of $99 or more. Barnes & Noble's price is $68, and free shipping on orders of 2 or more items (USA only). The book can also be obtained from the publishers, Scarecrow Press, at 15200 NBN Way, P. O. Box 191, Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17214 [phone: 1-800-462-6420, web site: www.scarecrowpress.com]. Orders via the Internet receive a 15% discount on the price of $85. In the UK, there is a new distributor, namely

Plymbridge Distributors, Ltd.
Estover Road
Plymouth PL6 7PY
Phone: 01752-202301
Fax: 01752-202333

Thanks to this change, the book is now offered at the price of £65.00 or e111.51 and Plymbridge will accept credit cards. Potential buyers in

Europe can also go to the Scarecrow Press website (see above) and select the button on the first page that reads: European Customers: Book Search / Ordering. Ordering using this method places the order directly with Plymbridge and shows the customer the UK prices.)

2. BING CROSBY'S COMMERCIAL RECORDINGS: From 78s to CDs

by F. B. (Wig) Wiggins

Wig's excellent discography remains available and don't delay if you want a copy. In years to come, you will kick yourself if you don't pick up this very nicely produced book while you can. Available from Wig (address inside front cover) for $17.50 (postpaid) or from Jim Reilly, 27 Beaulieu Rd., North End, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO2 0DN, UK. price £10 (postpaid).

3. BING CROSBY - A POCKETFUL OF DREAMS - THE EARLY YEARS - 1903 -1940

Gary Giddins has given me further details about the forthcoming paperback edition of his wonderful book and I quote:

"The paperback cover has just been sent me - it's essentially the same except the bottom half is gold, an improvement everyone seems to think. The paperback has an October publication date, which I believe means that copies will be on hand in September. The price is $17.95 ($26.95 in Canada) and it will be published by Back Bay Books (a Little Brown imprint); the ISBN no. is: 0-316-88645-9. The page in Little Brown's September 2002 catalog says, UK rights available! It's the same as the hardcover except for 50 or so small changes.

Also, the book won the Theater Library Association Award for best book on film or broadcasting, an award to be presented at Lincoln Center on May 31

Someone sent me a photocopy of pages 127-28 of a new book called "Letters to a Loving God" by Father Andrew Greeley, in which he talks glowingly about Bing and my tome. I'm enjoying the new issue of BING, and am especially pleased to see the Justin Green cartoon on the back cover. He had emailed me for permission to quote from the book."

The issue of Gary's book in paperback form has got to help Bing's image and will hopefully give him a fresh burst of favourable publicity. Gary will be speaking at Hofstra University in November and we hope to arrange for him to speak at the celebration of Bing's centenary at Gonzaga in May 2003. Incidentally, Gary is sensibly not giving a date for the publication of the second part of his book about Bing. It will be ready when it's ready, so we shall all have to be patient. In the meantime, we understand that Kathryn Crosby will have a new book out later this year which will presumably carry on from where "My Life With Bing" left off.

Gary Giddins also gave us details of a book coming out shortly called *The Brief, Madcap Life of Kay Kendall* by Eve Golden, with Kim Kendall (University Press of Kentucky, August 2002). In the account of her filming *Les Girls* in 1957, we read:

(page 112): Kay's biggest thrill was a developing friendship with her idol, Bing Crosby - she even taught Gladys Cooper's Corgi to roll over in ecstasy at the sound of his name. When Kay met Crosby on the MGM lot, she babbled nervously about an older record of his that she'd been looking to buy but which was no longer available in stores. During a recording session, Crosby knocked out a private version of it for her and had the record delivered to her. In return, Kay sent the singer a roomful of roses, delivered right in the middle of a recording session. During shooting, she somehow found the energy to visit Crosby in Palm Springs and to take a sightseeing tour of San Francisco. In fact, the high point of her Hollywood sojourn involved her new friend: "I remember I was doing a difficult scene,"she recalled. "Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire walked on the set and watched me. Afterward they told me how much they enjoyed my performance. Now, that was a big thrill to me and very rewarding."

Snippets of Bing

It is a pleasure to welcome Ted Laker back to our pages.

The name Crosby crops up in many books - sometimes it fits in naturally, on occasions there's a jarring effect - but mostly the Bing references act as a pleasant, even soothing interlude. I suppose a logical start can be made with two entries in "The Fabulous Phonograph", subtitled "From Tin Foil to High Fidelity" published in the USA in 1954, the whole being a fascinating tour into the world of recording techniques from Edison and beyond. Bing's first entrance is brief, included in a summary of Jack Kapp's gamble of offering the biggest personalities in popular music at 35 cents a record. Kapp was to persuade most of the 75 cent artists of the Brunswick label to sign up with Decca and was able to announce exclusive contracts with Bing Crosby, The Dorsey Brothers, Guy Lombardo and many others. The paragraph continues with blurbs about five column streamers headlined "Decca scoops the World", all very revolutionary in 1934. Perhaps that extract will suffice to give another slant on facts that will probably be familiar to many

readers.

The second item featuring Bing is quite lengthy. dealing with his search for a successful method of recording the Crosby radio shows. There's a very detailed account of the Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company's experiments and by 1947 they had come up with a pretty safe product, far ahead of what the Germans had been working on. Almost immediately they found an important and influential customer in the person of Bing Crosby. The singer's welcome for the new tape machine, as we know, started a landslide towards tape in the radio industry.

"The Big Book of Country Music" published by Penguin in 1995 has quite a few Crosby items. I won't try to detail them all; a taster will probably be sufficient. Under singing cowboy Gene Autry's entry, there is a brief sentence summing up the Autry formula for success "a typical mix of country mannerisms with the crooning popularised by Bing Crosby." They are not trying to compare the two singers, just trying to make a point as to how Autry eventually widened his appeal rather than just being accepted by the Saturday morning picture show brigade.

Bing comes in strong again when Milton Brown, one of the originators of western swing is discussed. It is stated that Brown worked primarily with a dance band, "his vocalising a combination of Cab Calloway styled jive, and Bing Crosby styled smooch." I can't confirm the accuracy of these words, but as comedy singer Johnny Standley used to say "It's in the book!".

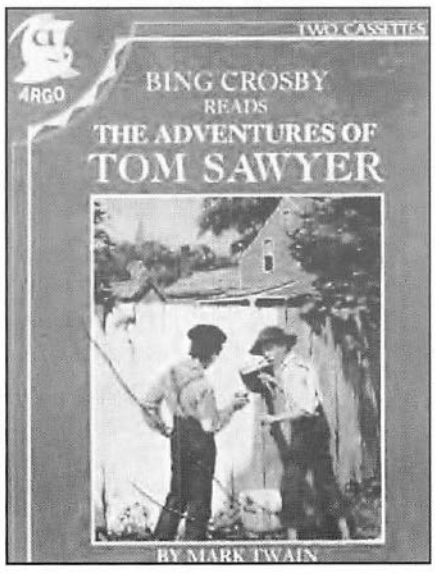
Staying with western swing under Tommy Duncan, lead vocalist with Bob Wills Texas Playboys, there's a description as to how Duncan defined the western swing vocal style, "smooth mellow with a Bing Crosby influenced sound." Duncan became the natural link between bluesy vocals of early country stylists and the more modern sound of popular crooners of the forties and after. One last intriguing entry from this very comprehensive book comes under Cindy Walker, a leading writer of country songs with over 500 under her belt, many proving big hits for other artists. Apparently Bing was so impressed with her work that he recorded her "Lone Star Trail" and then arranged an audition for the lady with Decca Records around 1944.

In 1946, jazz clarinettist Milton "Mezz" Mezzrow summed up his life in the book "Really the Blues". It's some years since I've seen the end product, but I can still recall an item on our man Crosby. Seems the jazz fraternity used to gather at a regular watering hole where the juke box was crammed full of exciting rhythms by leading instrumentalists of the day, the one exception being a man they all held in great esteem, Bing Crosby! Amazing how these things stay fresh in the memory bank and perhaps there's space for one more interlude from the printed page if you've stayed with me this far.
"Hank Williams - the Biography" published in 1994 has the following paragraph summarising the bridge between country and popular music, the author says:

> "It all gathered steam when Al Dexter's "Pistol Packin' Mama" was covered by Bing Crosby and the Andrews Sisters in 1943 becoming one of the biggest selling records of the following year."

I can't resist one more quote from this very readable volume. A story is related when Hank Williams is being signed up for a film contract and he says that he would like to take things a bit more easily and concentrate more on writing songs with Bing being mentioned as a client waiting in the wings. And that really has to be the end, so let's fade down the lights, draw the curtains and tiptoe gently from the scene.

Ted Laker



Keith Parkinson's Celluloid Crosby

Twenty years separate the two Crosby films entitled *Anything Goes*. Apart from the fact that both were filmed for Paramount, contained songs written by Cole Porter and had a shipboard setting, they had little in common. Bing was Billy Crocker in the first and Bill Benson in the second. The second was not a remake and to prevent any confusion the 1936 film was retitled *Tops is the Limit* for television screenings. If anything, the earlier title has stood up better in its monochrome glory than the 1956 VistaVision / Technicolor release. And it is the going on seventy year old *Anything Goes* that is the subject of this article.

It began life in 1934 as a stage musical built around thirteen Cole Porter songs. Porter enthusiasts regard it as his most successful musical. It opened towards the end of that year and ran for 420 performances. That may seem an insignificant run in these days of Andrew Lloyd Webber housing his musicals in West End and Broadway theatres for years on end, but in the depression years of the early 1930s anything playing for over six months was considered an impressive hit. Paramount saw the potential of the stage production and bought the rights. That was back in February of 1935, when the show had been running for just four months. Producers were not as protective of their shows seventy years ago and they permitted Paramount to start filming the property in September of 1935 whilst it was still running at the Alvin Theatre in New York. That was just ten months after its Broadway debut. Paramount recognised that the show's success was a combination of the story, the music and the performance of Ethel Merman. And so Merman was signed to reprise her role of Reno Sweeney after Paramount producer Benjamin Glazer negotiated a release from her other showbusiness obligations. There had been some speculation that the part of Reno Sweeney would be played by Dixie Lee but the publicity surrounding Merman's performance was strong enough to allow her to transfer her character to the screen.

Merman's part can be regarded as being almost incidental to the film's main plot but she proved her worth by singing "I Get a Kick Out of You" and the title song, something Bing didn't achieve in either of the two Paramount versions. The two male leads on Broadway were William Gaxton as Billy Crocker and Victor Moore as the "Reverend" Doctor Moon. Bing and Charlie Ruggles took on their respective roles.

Ethel Merman visits Bing and Charlie Ruggles in the ship's jail.

W. C. Fields had been slated for the Rev. Moon role but no doubt the studio realised that whatever character he was playing he would still end up as W. C. Fields. One survivor from the cast is Jerry Tucker. He played Junior in the film and in a 1998 interview explained that he was aged nine at the time of filming. He had been selected because of the acting experience he gained as one of the Little Rascals from the *Our Gang* series of comedy shorts. His one lasting memory of making *Anything Goes* was tossing a football with Bing whilst waiting for the director to call action.

The plot had Bing wooing English heiress Ida Lupino. To provide a number of farcical opportunities he stows away on an Atlantic liner to be near her. He is discovered by Charlie Ruggles, playing the part of a clergyman but really Public Enemy Number 13. Bing masquerades as Ruggles' partner and some good comedy routines are the result. The original plot and dialogue were the work of P. G. Wodehouse and Guy Bolton. Paramount assigned Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse to revise the show. Changes were necessary because the criminal element in the stage production was too sympathetic. Hollywood had just embraced a production code which attempted to preach high moral standards to movie audiences. It was the duty

of Lindsay and Crouse to tone down such glorification. The studio then used Walter De Leon, Sidney Salkow, John Moffitt and Francis Martin on the script. But it was the music of Porter and the presence of Crosby that counted at the box-office.

When most of the Cole Porter numbers had been jettisoned by Paramount the studio gave Leo Robin the job of writing new material especially tailored for Bing. Both "My Heart and I" and "Sailor Beware", with music by Frederick Hollander and Richard Whiting respectively, were woven into the plot. The former was wasted as the film's romantic ballad because it was used in a comedy sequence with Bing singing in a fake foreign accent as part of his disguise. However, the recording Bing made for Decca towards the end of filming did full justice t a beautiful love song. Also featured by Bing in the film is "Moonburn". Bing had heard Hoagy Carmichael sing it at a party and was sufficiently impressed to ensure that it was picked up by Paramount for use in *Anything Goes*. The lyric was Edward Heyman's but it was significant in being the first film in which a Hoagy Carmichael tune was used and credited.

It is always interesting to look at Crosby movies from the theatrical presentation point of view. As was customary at the time, major first run theatres in the States accompanied the on-screen presentation with a stage show. In Hollywood, Paramount's own flagship theatre was, not surprisingly, called the Paramount. To me, the names of the performers involved in the live presentation put together by the Fanchon and Marco agency mean little. Al Lyons and his orchestra featured vocalist Judy Starr and Billy and Beverly Beemis performed dance routines. Over here cine-variety was on the wane when *Anything Goes* played the Odeon provincial circuit in the summer of 1936 and it was distributed with a popular Paramount comedy of similar vintage to *Anything Goes:* Harold Lloyd in *The Milky Way*. It made up a value for money double bill. For what it's worth, Leonard Maltin's "Movie and Video Guide" awards two and a half stars to the Crosby picture and three to the Lloyd comedy. That summer of 1936 saw Britain enjoying a boom in the opening of super cinemas. They were mushrooming all over the country on an almost weekly basis. It was essential that the film selected for each opening presentation was able to generate as much publicity as possible for every new "super". Even the smaller Odeons rose to the occasion. *Anything Goes* was the premiere presentation at Guide Bridge, near Ashton-under-Lyne, in June of 1936. Sadly, these dream palaces could not draw sufficient audiences by the late 1950s and when I used to pass the Guide Bridge Odeon some thirty years after its opening it had changed its function to St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church. It passed through my mind that somehow Father O'Malley would have approved of its alternative use.

Staying with 1936, *Anything Goes* was the first of three Crosby pictures released that year. The others were *Rhythm on the Range* and *Pennies From Heaven*. Bing had truly made his mark in Hollywood. Just as importantly he was being acknowledged on Broadway where the supposedly more sophisticated New York audiences were appreciative of a Crosby parody. On the Great White Way where the stage presentation of "Anything Goes" had recently closed, the "Ziegfeld Follies of 1936" was introducing another major Paramount star-to-be to American theatregoers. Bob Hope was in the "Follies" of that year. And he was taking one of his first digs at his eventual sparring partner. The first act finale of the "Ziegfeld Follies of 1936" was a parody of the Busby Berkeley / Warner Bros. back stage musical. When Hope played "Bing Powell" the audience knew precisely the stereotype being depicted. Hope's leading lady in the Berkeley parody was Fanny Brice, by the way, who played the composite musical comedy female "F oy Blondell".

Returning to *Anything Goes* for a comment on the film as entertainment, the best person to turn to is Leslie Halliwell. His favourite era for films started around this time and he's the man to provide a fair comment. He was probably in the audience at the Odeon, Bolton when the film played to a cigarette smoke filled auditorium. He tells us it is an "amiably batty musical comedy, zestfully directed and blithely performed." I couldn't put it better myself.

Keith Parkinson

THE A-Z OF BING'S MOVIES

MARX, GROUCHO [Julius Henry Marx] (1890-1977) Comedian. The wisecracking brother of the subversive quartet which originally comprised Harpo, Chico and Zeppo until the last named left the act to become a theatrical agent. Groucho was in one Bing feature film, *Mr. Music* (1950). He played himself and joined Bing, Peggy Lee and the Merry Macs in a rendition of "Life is so Peculiar". In fact, Groucho always played himself irrespective of his character's name. The cast list might refer to him as Rufus T. Firefly or Doctor Hackenbush but under that greasepaint moustache he was still Groucho. In addition to *Mr. Music* he appeared in two short films which also featured Bing. At the start of the Crosby Hollywood career he was in a 1933 *Paramount on Parade* with brother Harpo and near the end of it he was in the "Saturday Evening Post" promotional one reeler *Showdown at Ulcer Gulch* (1958). Harpo also appeared in *Showdown*, as did Chico. In the late 1940s, Groucho guested on several occasions on Bing's Philco Radio Time for a few comedy sketches and duets with Crosby. Groucho's film appearances have always kept him in the public eye. From *The Cocoanuts* with three of his brothers in 1929 through to the disastrous *Skidoo* forty years later several generations have been introduced to his on-screen anarchism. Just as Marx Brothers' films are never out of circulation and absent from television screenings for very long, so Groucho's autobiographical books are rarely out of print. In his 83rd year he performed in a one man show at New York's Carnegie Hall and proved that despite frailness and senility he could still respond with an insult or ready quip, as appropriate.

MAUREY, NICOLE (1925-) Actress. French born Maurey was Bing's leading lady in two of his more dramatic pictures. She had contrasting roles in each. In *Little Boy Lost* (1952) she played Bing's wife, Lisa, who is shot by the Gestapo. Eight years later she played French literature teacher Helene Gauthier in *High Time*. In that one the plot concerned a tutor/pupil relationship with Bing which resulted in romance. She originally trained as a dancer and began acting in French films at the age of eighteen. Her first American film was *Little Boy Lost* and the success of that led to her appearing in mainly British and Hollywood films such as *The Constant Husband* (1955), *Me and the Colonel* (1958) and *The Scapegoat* (1959). None were big box-office so it must have been a surprise when Bing personally contacted her for his leading lady in *High Time*. She had enjoyed working with him on her first English language picture so agreed to his request without bothering to read the script. A couple of British films which were moderately successful followed. They were *Don't Bother to Knock* (1961) and *The Day of the Triffids* (1962). After that her career petered out. She only made two more films in France before retiring from the screen.

MAY I? (Song) This Mack Gordon-Harry Revel love ballad was sung twice by Bing in the 1934 film *We're Not Dressing*. He serenaded Carole Lombard on board a yacht and again when fishing from a rock. It was a key song from Bing's early years and he chose to re-record it for his 1954 musical biography.

MAYNARD, KEN (1895-1973) Screen cowboy. The fickle public was responsible for Maynard falling from being one of Hollywood's most popular western stars to being a stunt rider in *Road to Morocco* (1942). He was overqualified to lead a group of horsemen in a chase in that film but that was the only work he could find. After entering films in 1923, Maynard moved on to sound films and, together with his horse Tarzan, he became the hero of pre-teen moviegoers at Saturday matinees everywhere that movies were shown. He was probably the screen's first singing cowboy and until the mid thirties turned out several oaters a year, quite often acting as executive producer. Alcoholism might have contributed to his fall from fame. By the end of the 1930s he was touring the rodeo circuit. After his work on *Morocco* he tried to revive his screen career in a few very low budget westerns but by then Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, Bill Boyd, Johnny Mack Brown and others had captured the imagination of the kids who rode the range for a threepenny bit or a tanner every week. At the time of his death of malnutrition he was living alone in a trailer.

MEEK, DONALD (1878-1946) Actor. He was Gramp in *Pennies From Heaven* (1936). It was Bing who rescued him and granddaughter Edith Fellowes from the fate of an old folks home and an orphanage respectively. Glasgow born Meek was aptly named. Slight, bald and forever cast as a timid character, his film career coincided with the introduction of sound and continued up to the time of his death. He came from the golden age of Hollywood when character actors were in constant demand and Meek averaged four films a year. Not for him 'B' pictures. He never signed a long term contract with any of the major studios. Instead, producers sought out his services whenever they needed a Donald Meek type for their films. He appeared in some of the best loved and well remembered features of the thirties and forties. A random selection as evidence throws up *Top Hat* (1935 - a year in which ten films in which he appeared were released), *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1938), *Stagecoach* (1939), *My Little Chickadee* (1940) and *State Fair* (1945).

MEET THE SUN HALFWAY Song. Universal's *If I Had My Way* (1940), contained several upbeat songs written by Johnny Burke and James V. Monaco. "Meet the Sun Halfway" sets the tone of the light hearted picture in the first reel when Bing and Gloria Jean sing it at a concert. The couple then reprise the song in the film's last reel in a scene featuring a family reunion.

MELLOR, WILLIAM C. (1903-1963) Director of photography. Two time Academy Award winner as cinematographer on *A Place in the Sun* (1951) and *The Diary of Anne Frank* (1959), Mellor worked on Crosby films during the early part of the 1940s. His first Bing picture was *Road to Singapore* (1940). The following year he photographed *Birth of the Blues* and then returned to his second Road assignment - *Morocco* - in 1942. But his crowning Crosby achievement was Bing's first three-colour Technicolor movie the following year. That was *Dixie*, which received as much critical attention for its rich colour tones as it did for its acting and musical content. Directors with clout began to request Mellor and although Paramount gave him his first job as a lab assistant it did not buy a lifetime's loyalty to that studio and he moved to M-G-M and Fox in order to lens quality productions. Bing used him on *Abie's Irish Rose* (1946) but he is best remembered for the broad canvas colour films of the 1950s. My selection for his hall of fame would be *Bad Day at Black Rock* (1955), *Giant* (1956)

and *Peyton Place* (1957). William C. Mellor died whilst working on *The Greatest Story Ever Told*, which was released two years after his death.

MEMPHIS BLUES Song. *In Birth of the Blues* (1941) there is a scene early in the film where Bing sings this song outside the gaol to accompaniment from the imprisoned cornetist "Memphis" played by Brian Donlevy. It was one of several songs with its roots in early New Orleans jazz. Its composer, W. C. Handy, had written the song in 1912 and sold to a New York publisher for $50. It became Handy's first big success. Bing did not record the number for commercial release.

MERCER, JOHNNY (1909-1976) Lyric writer, composer, singer and co-founder of Capitol Records. Born John Herndon Mercer in Savannah, Georgia, his full name may be forgotten but his place of birth is always apparent in his vocal phrasing. His songs contributed to seven Crosby pictures. The first was the hit "I'm an Old Cowhand" used in *Rhythm on the Range* (1936). He created another hit for Bing, assisted by Mary Martin and Jack Teagarden, with "The Waiter and the Porter and the Upstairs Maid", one of the vocal highlights of *Birth of the Blues* (1941). A third winner for Bing eventually was "That Old Black Magic", featured by Johnnie Johnston in *Star Spangled Rhythm* in 1942 but not recorded for release on record by Bing until 1976. This seems a curious oversight as it was reprised by Bing in the major feature *Here Come the Waves* some two years later and featured by him on his Kraft Music Hall show on no less than four occasions. So far Mercer had been providing a single song per movie for Bing to sing. His only opportunity to write an almost complete film score for a Crosby picture came with *Here Come the Waves*. The big hit from that movie was "Ac-cent-tchu-ate the Positive" which was also sung by Bing in a short film *Swingtime with the Stars* made for the U.S. Coastguard at about the same time as *Waves*. The other Mercer compositions heard in the latter film and sung by Bing were "Let's Take the Long Way Home", "There's a Fellow Waiting in Poughkeepsie" and "I Promise You". A further song, "My Mama Thinks I'm a Star" was written for the film but not used. Harold Arlen provided the music for all of these songs. Arlen was on duty again the following year when he collaborated with Mercer on a couple of Bing vocals to which Eddie Bracken mimed: "Out of This World" and "June Comes Around Every Year". These were for the Paramount production *Out of This World*. Five years elapsed before a Mercer composition made it to the big screen for Bing to sing. The film was *Here Comes the Groom* (1951) and the song was "In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening". Paramount had already hired Ray Evans and Jay Livingston to write the songs for the film. It was by chance that Bing heard a recording of "In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening" by the joint composers Johnny Mercer and Hoagy Carmichael. He liked it sufficiently to have it included in *Here Comes the Groom* and the song went on to win the Oscar for the best song of 1951. It was Mercer's last film link with Bing although the two enjoyed a friendship that lasted until Mercer's death the year before Bing died. Bing was appearing at the London Palladium at the time that Mercer's passing due to a brain tumour was announced. He was contacted by the BBC and provided a brief tribute to the man who was his vocal partner on several Decca discs as well as penning many items in his recording repertoire. Mercer enjoyed sharing the limelight on record as much as he did providing lyrics for some of the foremost composers of popular music. Amongst the dozen or so famous composers he worked with are Gordon Jenkins, Jerome Kern, Andre Previn and Harry Warren. After over thirty years in the business he was still turning out excellent work as a singing and writing partner. His vocal album called "Two of a Kind" which he made with Bobby Darin never overstays its welcome on the turntable whilst his lyrics to Henry Mancini's "Moon River" will be earning royalties as long as quality vocalists choose to include it in their repertoire. An insightful book about Johnny Mercer's life is "Our Huckleberry Friend", co-written by his wife Ginger and published in 1982.

Decca recording session July 1, 1938. L to R: Perry Botkin, Johnny Cascales, Slim Taft, Spike Jones, ***Johnny Mercer****, Joe Sullivan, Bing Crosby, Jack Mayhew, Victor Young (leaning on table), Abe Lincoln, Andy Secrest*

Bing - the supporting player

A late 1963 entry in Malcolm Macfarlane's Crosby diary notes that Bing was then starting to film his role in "Robin and the Seven Hoods." That was a defining moment in the Crosby film career. For the first time in 31 years, he was playing a distinctly supporting role in one of his major movie appearances.

Although he often talked (sincerely, I'm sure) about his desire for strong co-stars - "to share the blame" - the fact is that he commanded first billing in 48 consecutive features, an extraordinary record for any major film star, one not achieved by Gable or Wayne, Bing's closest rivals on lists of the most successful movie players.

Back in the early days (1933), he had to accept second billing to Marion Davies in William Randolph Hearst's production of "Going Hollywood." From then on, it was first billing, ahead of any other performer in the film, until Sinatra and his Rat Pack submerged Bing in "Robin" in 1964. That had to be a difficult moment for Crosby, the final certification as it were that he was no longer at the top in Hollywood musicals. But he wouldn't dwell on it.

In "Robin and the Seven Hoods," Bing's on-screen billing was seventh, albeit with his own ("and Bing Crosby as Allen A. Dale") title card. On the LP record, in some of the advertising and in the cast credits at the end of "Robin and the Seven Hoods," he achieved fourth billing. Working for Sinatra, in a mob movie at that, had to be a trifle depressing, after three top-of-the-heap decades.

During the filming of "Robin and The Seven Hoods," Bob Thomas, longtime Associated Press reporter for Hollywood, approached Bing on the set. He described Crosby as wearing a green elf's costume and perched on a post, pillar or wall. He found Bing to be as casual and chipper as ever, if a bit more introspective.

As I recall the resulting AP story, Thomas pressed Bing about what he was doing in this back-up role. Bing said something about wanting to taper off from show business, a familiar Crosby theme in the '60s. But he added that he had eventually decided he wanted to work again. He liked the look of this part in a musical comedy (not common movie fare by then.) So he took it, collected his $100,000 - and never mind the billing.

As a supporting player, he couldn't expect the best lines or superior songs. He was confined to a wimpy role. In 48 previous films, he had been the

dominant figure on screen. In this, his last Hollywood musical, he was on screen for only 31 minutes, just 25 percent of the film's running time. But there are a good many Crosby fans who think he was the most entertaining performer in a not-so-scintillating film; indeed that he pretty much ran away with it, the Rat Pack to the contrary not withstanding.

I don't have a copy of the Thomas interview. Thomas didn't mention it in his 1977 Crosby biography, rushed into print after Bing's death. But if someone could uncover the text of that 1963 AP story, it might shed interesting light on Bing's state of mind at the time. Thomas was an old Crosby hand, having interviewed him numerous times over many years, as did Vernon Scott of United Press International. At this writing, Thomas is still working for the Associated Press, which terms him "the dean of Hollywood coverage."

Thomas called his 1977 book "The One and Only Bing." It was generally celebratory. It cited "so many pleasurable memories." It saluted "his joyful songs, his buoyant being." It recognized his long standing as one of Hollywood's most popular film stars, not to mention the worldwide recognition of his records and his radio work.

But, in his all-too-brief biography of Bing, Thomas was also frank. He acknowledged Crosby's "dark moods." He added: "To his associates and to those of us who interviewed him, the real Bing Crosby contrasted starkly with the easygoing image he projected over radio and on the screen."

Thomas saw Bing in his Hollywood heyday as "a classic loner," with few close friends. Thomas: "If Bing thought he was being used or someone was pushing too hard, that person was suddenly dropped." He was "the master of the see-through stare." If someone bored him, he simply strolled away, no apologies.

The Thomas book includes a list of films and of records, compiled by others. But its most distinctive feature is close to 200 photographs, taken at many stages in Bing's life. Some are familiar (Bing in his baseball uniform at Gonzaga.) But many, from the files of the Associated Press, are a bit less common (Bing unrecognizable as a circus clown.) Unfortunately, they are rather poorly reproduced in the quickie paperback.

The book includes no shot of Bing in his elfin outfit for "Robin and the Seven Hoods." If there were one - and if he were smiling - it would suggest that at last he was comfortable in his secondary position in the next-to-last effort of his legendary Hollywood career. In other realms of show business, he was to keep relatively busy for another 13 career years, with some successes along the way. It was only the movie musical years that he had finally positioned in his rear-view mirror.

Bob Achorn

HIGH SOCIETY Reissued!

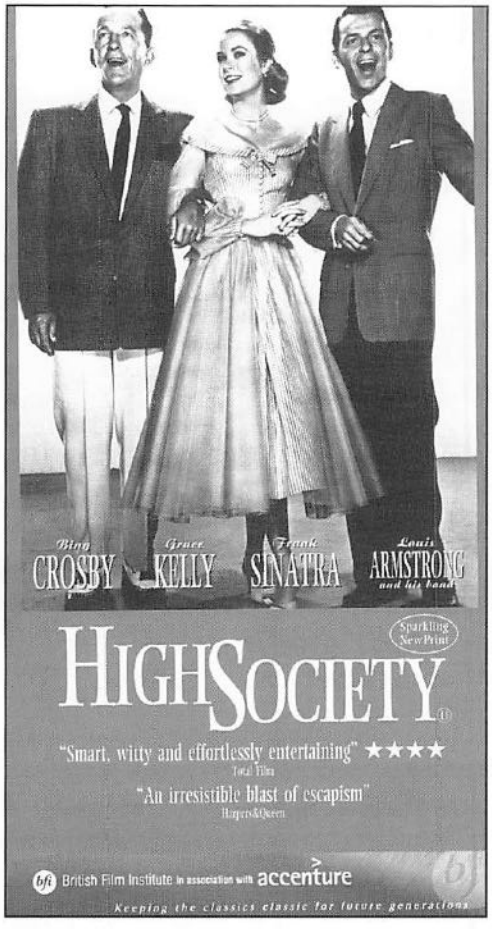
Yes, Bing's film *High Society* was released nation-wide in the UK to selected cinemas at the end of May. The British Film Institute in association with Accenture put together this restored classic and it has attracted a lot of publicity. Most critics compared *High Society* unfavourably with the 1940 black and white *The Philadelphia Story* but nevertheless there have been many nice comments. As an example, *The Mail on Sunday* carried the following on June 2:

> *High Society* is the latest vintage treat reissued by the BFI in shiny new prints and guaranteed to brighten a day. Katherine Hepburn's earlier sophisticated prancing between Cary Grant and Jimmy Stewart is more classic, snappy screwball, but this 1956 musical remake of *The Philadelphia Story*, with Cole Porter songs, is still a 'swellegant' party.
> Hollywood princess Grace Kelly, in her last screen role, flirts deliciously between her ' chtsman ex, Bing Crosby, and tabloid reporter . rank Sinatra, amid preparations for her wedding to square John Lund.
> The graceful high jinks were transported from Philly to Rhode Island to account for Louis Armstrong arriving en route to the Newport Jazz Festival as a fun chorus to the money folk's antics. But the highlight remains Crosby and Sinatra's witty party piece "Well, Did You Evah?" No, it nevah ceases to delight.
> **Angie Errigo**

Of course, some of the younger reviewers may never have seen the film before and I suspect that this was the case with the superb review seen on the teletext of Channel 4.

> In this perfect film, haughty society queen Tracy (Grace Kelly) is about to marry a dull but reliable man. Her ex-husband Dexter (Bing Crosby) and cheeky hack Mike (Frank Sinatra) are determined to convince her she's making a mistake and help her down off her pedestal.
> A superb cast, glorious Cole Porter score, sharp dialogue, slick screenplay plus divine costumes and sets - sensational.
> **Anne Dasey** - rated Excellent

The film was showing at two cinemas in my general area and I went along to the Plaza Super Cinema in Stockport, Cheshire, to see the film. Roy Chappell, our long time member who has entertained professionally for 30 years, had been invited to sing a selection of Bing songs before the movie and I went to support him with the intention of leaving half way through the film as I have seen it countless times and can almost recite the dialogue.



By way of background, the Plaza Super Cinema was originally opened in 1932 with 1800 seats but was converted to a Bingo Hall in the 1960s. In recent years it has been returned to its original use by a charitable trust and the volunteers have gone out of their way to re-create a night at the pictures that many of us remember from our childhood. Not only is there a feature film but a supporting programme, an intermission with uniformed usherettes selling ice creams and incredibly a wonder organ rising out of the floor! I was greeted by staff in dinner jackets and I sat and enjoyed a programme of nice old songs played by Michael Holmes at the Plaza's original Compton Cinema Organ. There then followed the first presentation of its kind in any cinema for over 50 years, a live singer accompanied by the aforesaid organ.

Roy Chappell sang a nice selection of Bing songs starting with "Where The Blue of the Night" and continuing with "Zing a Little Zong", "I'm Gonna Sit Right Down & Write Myself a Letter" and "I Love You Samantha" before pausing to announce that he was going to sing a song recorded by Bing in 1931 when he was accompanied by Helen Crawford on the Paramount Theatre Organ in New York. It was of course "Can't We Talk it Over" and it obviously meant a lot to Roy to be singing the song as he himself was accompanied by a theatre organ, because he gave a truly inspired version of the song in Bing's original key. Roy thoroughly deserved the applause from the crowd of 500 or so. He finished with "Pennies From Heaven" and it was nice to hear the audience joining in, just as they did with Bing at the Palladium in 1976. During his performance, Roy also managed to slip in a plug for the ICC.

The lights went down, the organ descended into the pit and we were treated to a "Look At Life" short from the 1960s which looked at the modern cinemas of that era. The lights came back on and I duly bought my ice cream from the uniformed usherette before settling down to watch *High Society*.

The BFI have done a wonderful job in putting together this pristine print and it was lovely to see Bing up on the big screen with excellent sound (mono, not stereo though). And did I leave early? You guessed it - I was so entranced by the film and Bing's superb performance that I stayed until the end, revelling in the songs and the interplay between the stars. I'm sure that the film will have converted many of those watching into Bing fans.

The evening finished with the organ rising again from the depths for Michael Holmes to play the National Anthem and everyone stood to attention. Talk about nostalgia!

The manager of the Plaza is keen to mount a special Bing festival next May and I am making enquiries about Bing films which are available in 35 millimetre format.

Malcolm Macfarlane

"Here is My Heart" shown in Syracuse, NY

Even more of a surprise and amazing as it seems, the rarest of Bing's films was shown at the annual Cinefest in Syracuse, New York on March 7. Our old friend Bob DeFlores was involved and the Post-Standard newspaper of Syracuse described how Bob got a call from Bing. The article continued:

> "I was a big Crosby fan from hearing him on radio and watching his films. So I went, and we traded film like kids trade cards," DeFlores recalls.
>
> The principal exchange was the 1934 musical, "Here Is My Heart," of which DeFlores had the only print. The movie also starred reigning movie-musical queen Kitty Carlisle and featured such other luminaries as Roland Young and Reginald Owen. It casts Crosby as a radio star in love with Carlisle and boasts the enduring hit song "Love Is Just Around the Corner."

"Here Is My Heart" brings DeFlores to Syracuse today for its screening at 9:45 p.m. on the first day of the 22nd annual Cinefest at Liverpool's Holiday Inn. Along with it, he's bringing other Crosby rarities - a 1933 short, "Please"; some footage of the singer-actor golfing; more footage of Crosby playing with his dog in his back yard; and his screen test for the role of real-life, legendary entertainer Will Rogers.

That day in 1977, when he and Crosby met, changed DeFlores' life forever, marking his leap into show business. Since then, he prefers to be labeled as a film preservationist who "hunts, finds and restores" and to do so travels throughout the world.

Surprisingly, the preservationist has been able to make a full-time living. When A & E, AMC, the History Channel and PBS need newsreel or film footage for a biography or other telecast, DeFlores is the man they call.

It's wonderful to see Bing receiving coverage like this and I should love to see a mint copy of "Here Is My Heart". Perhaps Bob could show it at Hofstra and / or Gonzaga?

Kitty Carlisle confronts Bing whilst Cecelia Parker looks on in 'Here Is My Heart'

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue

Graham Pascoe, 211 William Street, Bathurst, NSW 2795, Australia

David Currington has sent me the latest BING and it's another interesting and well-presented publication. Congratulations to all concerned.

I was especially interested to read Wig's report on Hofstra University and hope to hear from them soon about my paper. Meanwhile, I'm continuing to collect much interesting information and will return to the New South Wales State Library in Sydney next week to use its extensive collection of relevant periodicals.

On page 39 you asked for readers' opinions on the coverage you give to UK radio. As a foreign reader, I must say that it's of limited interest to me so an expanded coverage would be somewhat wasted on me. Of course, I realise you have to consider the interests of your whole audience.

Wendy Mahoney's new membership was reported and I'm pleased to be able to tell you that Wendy kindly sent me information for my research not long after my project got under way. I've just written to her again. I can say the same for Peter Burgis.

The biggest gap in my information concerns the sales of sheet music in Australia for songs which Bing made popular. I believe that sheet music sales were an important indicator of 'success' in the 1930s and 1940s. I expect that the only way I could attempt to get such data is by contacting the relevant music publishers (if they still exist). No doubt I would need to specify which songs interest me and I'm hoping Wendy and Peter can help me there.

(Editor: I suggested to Graham that there may have been a trade publication in Australia, similar to Variety in the USA, which might help with information about sheet music sales. If anyone else has any ideas on the subject, please contact Graham as soon as possible. Graham mentioned his thoughts about our coverage of local UK radio and he echoes what many of our members outside the UK feel. However, our UK members have some thoughts too . . .)

Paul Barnes, BBC Local Radio for the Eastern Counties, Surrey Street, Norwich NR1 3PA, UK

I am one of the radio presenters whose teeth (still my own) have been brushed by the boots of recent editorial policy referred to by Stan White (BING 130). It seems to me that the problem stems from the "I" in ICC: International.

Clearly, reports on what UK radio stations are doing will be of limited interest to readers abroad, except to let them know what they are missing.

There can't be many Crosby aficionados across the world who are so well served as those with access to BBC local radio stations. Not a lot we can do about that, although I do know that my own programmes are circulated internationally by way of tapes taken off air.

However, I think that more could be done to help UK readers find the programmes which Bert Bishop covers. Simply publish the times and frequencies - in every issue. Here are those which relate to the programme over which I preside, *Gold for Grownups*. It is broadcast each Sunday evening between 18.00 and 21.00.

Norfolk	95.1 and 104.4 FM
Cambridgeshire	95.7 and 96.0 FM
Northampton	103.6 and 104.2 FM
Suffolk	95.5, 103.9 and 104.6 FM
BBC Three Counties	103.8, 104.5 and 95.5 FM
Essex	96.3 and 103.5 FM

Of course, the reach of the programme extends far beyond county boundaries. *Gold for Grownups* has listeners in Greater London, Kent, Sussex, Warwickshire, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire. On the AM frequencies it is heard even farther afield.

As for BING readers outside the UK - sorry boys and girls, you need to find a pal who will tape it for you and post it. Alternatively you could immigrate. You will be made very welcome.

Arthur Blood, 597 Osmaston Rd., Derby DE24 8NE

. . . Now we come to Stan White's letter in BING 130 about your suggestion to limit the amount of reporting on local radio and the playing of Bing as a result of members contacting the various presenters and providing them with material to play. I don't think this is a good idea because there are quite a few members who do this on a regular basis and if their efforts are not acknowledged we might have a lot less of Bing played on local radio. A compromise might be to just report the special anniversaries such as his birthday and his passing.

Having heard a lot of air shots via Stan White it was nice to see a picture of Paul Barnes in the last magazine and it might be a good idea if other presenters had their pictures in BING. . .

(Editor: We shall do our best to cover the subject appropriately in the interests of all members. Judge us after the next issue or two. Another point raised in our last edition was that there might have been too much coverage of Gary Giddins' wonderful book. Norman Wolfe responds below and he too has an opinion on the radio coverage.)

Norman Wolfe, Cumming, Georgia, USA

. . . as to the magazine, I think you needn't continue to apologize for the emphasis on the Giddins book. What your dissenters do not take into consideration is that the Giddins book was the impetus for modern critics to assess Crosby's career and, while we may not agree with all of them, they gave that edition of the magazine a high level of writing and thinking, probably the best we have had. If you have more in that vein, I urge you to use them. I thought the best thing in this edition was the interview by Tracy Johnston. She came close to getting close, didn't she?

As for the stuff on who plays what records in the UK, I confess I skip over that but I have no objection to it being there for those whom it interests.

(Editor: Thanks, Norman, for your views.

We managed to create a bit of a debate about actions needed to be taken in respect of Bing's centenary on Steven Lewis's Bing Crosby Internet Museum site back in April. Greg Van Beek put together an appeal which I have pleasure in reproducing here.)

Greg Van Beek, 3006 Emerald St., West Bend, WI 53095, USA

I fear requests to the major TV networks (ABC, CBS, NBC) would fall on deaf ears. They're all after a younger audience, and their programming reflects this. However, I understand this May, NBC will be airing it's first Bob Hope TV special since Nov. 1996. It will be comprised of outtakes from his previous TV specials, all to tie in with the 75th Anniversary of the NBC network.

I tried to interest the NBC off-spring cable news network, MSNBC, to feature Bing on one of their "Headliners & Legends" hour-long biography shows with little success. Perhaps if we all dropped an e-mail to Headliners@msnbc.com we could get some action. The more requests they receive to produce a program devoted to Bing, the better our chances of seeing one.

Also, PBS has been very good to Bing in the past, with the 1987 "Remembering Bing" special and the 1991 "The Magic Of Bing" special. Perhaps they would be interested in producing another program. The PBS web site has a section devoted to program proposals at http://www.pbs.org/producers/proposal/index.html. I guess it couldn't hurt to send them an e-mail and see what happens.

Another thought is A&E. They could do an updated Biography on Bing. As I recall, his Bio was produced way back in 1993, and done with the "help" of Gary Crosby. A new two hour expanded biography of Bing would be wonderful. Have Phil Crosby on to tell everyone what really happened.

Bob Hope's A&E bio was expanded from 1 hour to 2, and was produced with the full co-operation of Hope Enterprises, so many rare, never

before seen film & TV clips were able to be used. Go to:http://www.aande.com/feedback/feedback.html and choose "Biography" under Programming/Viewer Relations to make your suggestion known. Again, the more people who take the time to this, the better our chances for success.

There's also radio. If any of you have stations that broadcast music of Bing's contemporaries, contact them. Tell them Bing's 100th birthday is fast approaching and that you'd like to see them do a program to commemorate this. If they need music to play, offer it to them.

And newspapers. Have your local paper do a story on you and your interest in Bing. Newspaper reporters love human interest stories. Show off your collections to them. If need be, use the connection to Bob Hope and his centennial. The names Hope & Crosby still go hand in hand. It's up to us, all of us, to see to it that Bing's centennial does not go by unnoticed. I know in 1986, the Al Jolson fans were very successful in drawing attention to his centennial. There's no reason why us Crosby fans can't be even more successful.

(Editor: Well said, Greg. This is indeed the time to make that effort so that the centenary is not overlooked by the media. On this subject, I have been in touch with Universal Music in the UK about their plans for the centenary and had the following reply:

Silvia Montello, Universal Music, UK

Many thanks for your note about Bing's anniversary. We are planning to reissue a few of his existing discs to tie-in with the anniversary - his 'Memories' discs which were available at midprice before will now come under the Spectrum stable. We would also run a complete repromotion of all his live CD titles in the UK. If there are any competitions that you would like to run in the BING magazine around this anniversary, using any of our Universal titles, then please do contact Miriam Orisan to arrange for prizes.

If there is any more information you'd like about the releases that we'll be repromoting don't hesitate to contact us and we can send you through details and tracklistings.

(Editor: Naturally, I have been back in touch with the company and offered to advertise their offerings. A competition might be nice too. I know that some of our members in the USA have not been able to obtain the "More Memories" CD so it is welcome news that it is to be reissued.

Next, let me mention the Internet. I had the following nice little e-mail recently which was very pleasing as my little web site is only very basic. However it does have a link to the Bing Crosby Information File and to the more sophisticated sites run by Steven Lewis and Shaun Crampton, so perhaps it serves a useful purpose after all!)

Llgies@aol.com

My daughter had to do a report on Bing Crosby for school recently and I found your site via dogpile. I just want to tell you what a wonderful, informative resource it was for her. We found everything she needed, and more! Thanks again!

(Editor: Glad to see that the schools are calling for reports on Bing. Wonderful! Another email I had was from Harold Sunners and I couldn't answer his question. Can anyone help? Tell me or Wig if you cannot respond to Harold on the Net.)

Harold Sunners (HSunners @aol.com)

I have a tape of Bing singing a song called "Idaho Fight Song." It is a parody to the tune of "Buckle Down Winsockie, Buckle Down." I do not see this song listed anywhere. I checked the radio listings, discographies, etc. Is it possible that you have some knowledge of this song such as where and when Bing sang it? There is an orchestra with him singing so it is obvious he did not sing it in the bath tub. Any assistance would be greatly appreciated.

The Bing Crosby Story

Bertel Dueholm sent us a copy of *Modern Screen* magazine for April, 1951 which contained a long article under the above title. My friend Gary Giddins would probably say it had been written by a hagiographer (a biographer who idealises or idolises his subject) but nevertheless it contains some interesting facts and comments. If nothing else, it helps to convey just how significant Bing was in 1951.

During the year of 1951, an aging jazz singer named Bing Crosby will reach the all-time peak of his popularity. This prediction has been made before; in fact, every year since 1936. Yet, this year, Bing Crosby will be accorded such universal acclaim that the only honor left for his old age, with the possible exception of the Presidency of the United States, would be an outright gift of Fort Knox.

This year is Bing's year. From January through December, the people of America will be constantly reminded by their newspapers, their radios, their record shops, and their neighborhood theaters that the Old Groaner is celebrating his 20th anniversary in show business. In the 20 crowded years which have ensued since he first stood before a microphone in the New York studios of CBS, Bing Crosby has made a deeper impression on our national culture than any other personality of our

time, with the possible exception of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The thousands of songs which he has sung are lastingly imbedded in the emotional life of two generations. His records have sold more than 70,000,000 copies, his 43 motion pictures have amassed a total gross revenue of more than $1,000,000,000 and have been seen by more than 500,000,000 people the world over. His weekly radio program, now in its 18th year, remains high in popularity at a time when television is ringing the death knell over many of the established shows on the air.

During the month of January, inspired by the release of his latest Paramount picture, *Mr. Music*, Dccca Records, CBS, Liggett and Myers, Famous Music, and Paramount Pictures joined forces in a gigantic salute to Bing Crosby, and the response of the nation was overwhelming. On "We the People," Otto Harbach. president of ASCAP, made an unprecedented award to Bing and acclaimed him as "the one man who has done more for popular music than anyone else." More than 1200 disc jockeys all over the country echoed the words of Martin Block who, during a two-hour tribute from the lobby of New York's Paramount Theater, said, "For the disc jockeys of America, I want to say that if there is any one guy in the world who made the disc jockeys popular, it was a fellow named Bing Crosby; and I, personally, will be eternally grateful for your wonderful work, your wonderful records, and the entertainment that you've brought to the people of America." Decca Records, searching for an adequate testimonial of his value as a recording artist, presented Bing with a gold record of "White Christmas." This record, incidentally, has sold more than 7,000,000 pressings to date.

On January 10th, designated as "Bingsday" across the land, hundreds of prominent persons from all over the world sent congratulatory wires to Bing at his studio. It is estimated that, before the year is out, more than 5,000,000 Crosby fans will have written their personal best wishes to him.

Today, at 48, Bing Crosby seems to gain strength as he rolls along. *Mr. Music* will undoubtedly be one of the largest grossers in Paramount history. In honor of his 20th anniversary, Decca Records will reissue many albums of Bing's movie songs, many of which have long been unavailable to the public. These together with the 30-odd new songs he will record this year, very probably will bring his total record sales near the 100,000,000 mark.

By his own admission, Bing Crosby is not a romantic figure. Perhaps because he is not, he is one of the few personalities in Hollywood who have successfully managed to bridge the gap to middle age with no attendant loss of popularity. This is largely due to the fact that the amiable, easy-going character he portrays in films and on the air is, in reality, Bing Crosby himself. Over the years, his unpretentious and serene conduct has been one of the most comforting and reassuring influences of our troubled times. Bing is not only America's most beloved entertainer; he is also one of the few men in public life on whom people can focus their minds and their hearts when they are anguished and low in spirit.

For a man with such a significant burden of responsibility, Bing lives his public life, as always, with a seemingly minute amount of bustle and care. To the casual observer, he sometimes gives the impression of complete effortlessness and, at times, of downright indifference. Yet nothing could be further from the truth. As the people who work with him know, Bing ambles through his day with his mind in a state of constant activity. Always an introvert, Bing has become even less demonstrative as he has grown older. It has been said that Bing never reveals his total personality to anyone, not even to his closest friends. As a result, some say that music is the dominant influence in his life; others are willing to swear that athletics occupy most of his attention.

To the policeman on the DeMille gate at Paramount, Bing presents a habitually cheerful exterior. Invariably, the radio in his green Cadillac convertible coupe is booming at band-concert volume, and Bing is whistling a brisk accompaniment as he drives onto the lot.

Bing submits to makeup patiently, talking spiritedly to Wally Westmore about last night's baseball game, a TV program, or the recent happenings on his radio show. Bing stopped wearing a complete makeup in 1930. Now Wally applies only enough cake makeup to cover Bing's beard and then brings out the hairpiece, which Bing disparagingly refers to as "my mucket" or "my divot."

Bing Crosby and Wally Westmore, makeup expert, between scenes on location in Jasper National Park, Canada

Bing does not pay much attention to the selection of his wardrobe, probably due to the fact that he is almost totally colorblind. Some years ago, a wardrobe man handed him a book of cloth samples and asked him to pick out six fabrics to be made up into slacks for his next picture. Bing chose a ghastly array of mustard, salmon, beige, green, and blue. The wardrobe man substituted six less riotous colors, and Bing never knew the difference.

By the time Bing arrives on the set, he knows all of his lines. He has a photographic memory and can learn whole pages of dialogue with two or three hurried readings. This happy faculty also applies when it comes to learning a new song. According to Joe Lilley, who does the arrangements for all Crosby musicals, Bing has the "fastest ear" in show business. "Giving Bing an arrangement is just like playing it to a tape recorder," Joe says. "One time, and it comes back at you exactly the way you put it on there."

Bing's recording sessions usually are his first activity on every picture. He prefers to do his singing as early as possible in the morning, when his voice is rested and powerful. Bing talks right up to the downbeat, which puts the Paramount soundmen into a state of frenzy. Although he has come close, Bing has never missed his cue. Most of the engineers' difficulties occur when Bing is recording a duet with his leading lady in the soundproof vocal booth. If the lady is not accustomed to recording with Crosby, invariably she will still be laughing at one of his jokes when their cue to begin singing is given. During the last Road picture, one of the song numbers which included Olga San Juan and Mary Hatcher almost missed being recorded. The orchestra ran through 14 takes before Olga and Mary could get beyond the introduction without giggling. Bing and Bob Hope were tickling them. When he is recording a solo number, Bing looks on the vocal booth, which he calls the "maison de la pooch" with extreme loathing.

"Get me out there with the rhythm section," he will complain, after singing one number in the booth. Joe Lilley, who conducts the recording sessions, has worked with Bing since 1940 and is as acquainted with his singing habits as anyone in the music business.

"Bing is the easiest singer in the world to write an arrangement for," Joe says. ""He has a normal singing range of nearly an octave and a half, and there isn't a note that he cannot hit within it. I used to tell him that with one more octave, he'd be a piano. And Bing is not restricted to any one singing style. For *Mr. Music*, I wrote a duet finale for Bing to sing with Dorothy Kirsten - in operatic baritone range. Under Bing's part, I simply wrote, 'Belt it!' He almost knocked the soundman off his chair."

It is this ability to handle really difficult passages which has caused many operatic singers, including Dorothy Kirsten, to comment with amazement upon Bing's tremendous power and range as a baritone. It is also the faculty which caused his younger brother Bob to declare, several years ago, that he had been making a living off Bing's middle register for years.

During the past three months, Bing has been occupied with the production of *Here Comes the Groom*, in which he will have Jane Wyman as his leading lady. While rehearsing the elaborate dance number which they do together, Bing suddenly slumped to the floor. "Wait a minute," he wearily commented to Jane, "this dance routine was made for a younger type fellow."

Bing and Jane Wyman in the cool, cool, cool of the evening.

Jane sings a duet with Bing in *Here Comes the Groom*, in which the accompanying action is very complicated and difficult to photograph. Jane and Bing ran through it an exhausting number of times without getting a usable print. As the all-too-familiar music signaled the start of the 31st take, Bing put his hand to his ear and said to Jane, "Listen, darling. They're playing our song!"

On the set, Bing is never too busy to chat with

visitors, particularly when they are representatives from the world of sports. Last year when the Notre Dame football team came west to play U. S. C., Bing invited them all out to the studio for lunch, and spent nearly an hour posing for individual pictures with each player.

Most of the details of Bing's busy life at the studio are efficiently attended to by Leo Lynn, who was his stand-in until 1946, when a heart-attack forced Leo into lighter work. A fellow classmate at Gonzaga, Leo has been with Bing since 1934, and will be with him as long as he wants a job. He takes Bing's calls on the set, handles his clothes, and once a day drives out to the Crosby Building on Sunset Boulevard to pick up Bing's mail and to leave his dictaphone records for transcription. Leo has always been impressed by Bing's casual and easy-going manner, which is in sharp contrast to Leo's previous employment as valet to the English actor, Clive Brook, who kept 13 clocks set with the exact time and required Leo to address him as "Sir."

After 18 years, Bing is almost as familiar a figure on the Paramount lot as Cecil B. DeMille, who came with the lease. It is a common sight to see Bing pumping along on his bicycle, which is usually decorated with a sign reading: "Creepalong Crosby, Top Hand, Q Ranch, Wild Horse, Nevada." (Recently there's been a new sign reading "Mr. Music - Who Needs Him?" Bing dictated the words to a sign painter.)

Except when he is tied up with business in his dressing room, Bing has lunch with the cast in the main dining room. He either eats the standard diet luncheon on the menu, or leaves the selection up to Pauline Kessinger, the commissary manager. Bing eats sensibly, stays away from starches, and shows a marked preference for spinach, peas, and green beans.

"In all the years we've been serving Bing," says Mrs. Kessinger, "we've never had an order sent back, nor had a single complaint about the food from him."

At four o'clock each day, Mrs. Kessinger sends a pot of orange pekoe tea and two slices of whole wheat toast over to Bing's dressing room on the set. He used to be an inveterate fruit eater who would munch on several apples and oranges every day, but recently, he discovered from his doctor that the old adage of "an apple a day" does not apply in his case. They give him indigestion.

Bing occasionally presents Mrs. Kessinger with a problem which calls for great imagination and enterprise. One such occasion arose during the war when Bing invited 400 sailors from a ship docked at San Pedro to have lunch with him, and the boys brought their sea-going appetites with them. During the fall months, Bing will frequently receive a shipment of pheasants, grouse, or trout from a

Bing dining with Barney Dean in the commissary.

friend in Idaho. He asks Mrs. Kessinger how many the spread will feed, and then invites that many from his crew for dinner.

It is common knowledge at Paramount that Bing usually starts a picture shortly before Christmas, so the extras and part-time grips can earn some money before the holidays. He also evidences an admirable devotion to his friends. In 1940, when Bing made *Rhythm on the River*, he prevailed upon Wingy Manone, a New Orleans trumpet player of his acquaintance, to play several jazz numbers in the picture. Wingy, who idolizes Bing, presented a problem when it was discovered that he couldn't read the elaborate orchestration. For two and a half hours, Wingy tried to pick it up by ear, and when it was finally suggested to Bing that maybe another musician should play the part, he replied. "No, he's a real musician. It would break his heart." Finally, lunch time came and, as the last musician filed out, he looked back and saw Bing behind some scenery working with Wingy.

"Now, try this break," Bing was saying, and proceeded to sing it. When the band came back from lunch, Wingy had the number down pat, with a few tricky riffs thrown in.

Authentic jazzmen like Wingy Manone also find a welcome haven on the weekly Bing Crosby radio show, which originates from the CBS studios in Hollywood each Wednesday. Musically, Bing finds himself completely at home in the company of Louis Armstrong, Jack Teagarden, Joe Vcnuti, and other such immortals of jazz music. Somehow Bing's most memorable shows are always built around these people, and Bing himself seems to be sparked by their presence. In the language of Joe Venuti, another admirer of Bing's, the answer is simple.

"Some people think of Bing as a torch singer," he says. "But he is the greatest jazz singer in the world. Sure, there are a lot of other good singers.

But let them prove themselves for twenty years before they start standing up alongside of Bing."

Bing's longtime association with the nation's greatest jazz musicians is in large part responsible for the polished mixture of erudition and jive talk that makes up the pattern of his unusual speech.

"Bing talks like a Harvard English professor who has just returned from a slow walk through Harlem," a friend says.

When Bing is not entertaining the elite of jazz music on his show, he sticks close to the lackadaisical, conversational formula which has been his trademark on radio for 18 years.

As a comedian, Bing presents a more difficult script problem than most radio performers. "With Benny's show, for instance, you have all of those characters working for you," says Bill Morrow, his writer. "But Bing is such a definite personality, you can't use a lot of funny stuff because it just doesn't fit Bing's style."

Bing's own style of humor is best understood when compared with that of his old friend and running mate, Bob Hope. The peculiar blend of their talents has brought thousands of laughs to the people of America. Their famous Road pictures, of which another is now in preparation, their radio banter, and their running battle on the golf course, have brought repartee back into vogue as a form of humor.

The combination of Hope and Crosby has the simplest formula of any comedy team in America. They simply stand on opposite sides of the microphone and throw insults at one another.

Some of the brightest portions of Bing's current season's schedule have been the appearances of the Firehouse Five Plus Two, a highly individual jazz band made up of Walt Disney artists and writers who began playing jazz music as a hobby. Bing discovered this group last year, when the boys were invited by brother Larry to play for the Victory dinner at Bing's Pebble Beach Golf Tournament. The Firehouse Five have since appeared on the radio show five times.

Bing's singing with the group has drawn a tremendous flood of fan mail, most of which makes the point that he sounds more youthful with them. According to Ward Kimball, Firechief and trombone player, this is actually the case.

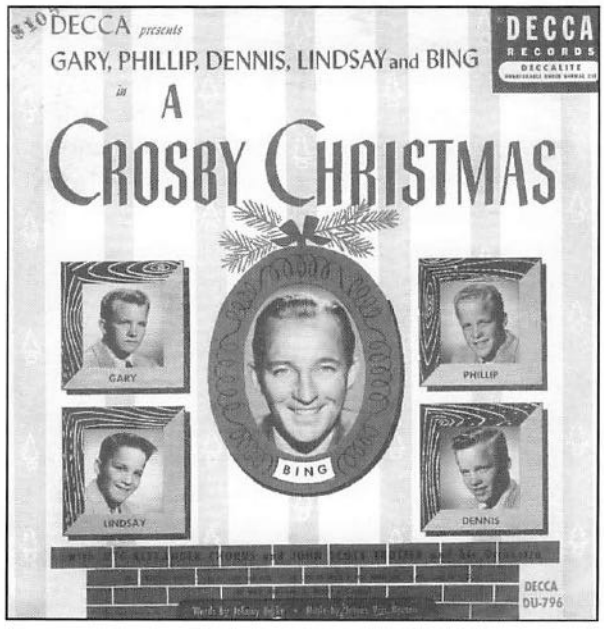
"We play in a higher key than most of Bing's current arrangements," he explains, "so he sings like he used to long ago."

During the twenties and early thirties, it was customary for musical arrangers to ask a singer what his high note was, and then write his arrangement to fit below it. All of Bing's early songs were fashioned around his top note. But in 1936, when John Scott Trotter, who is now the musical director of the Crosby show, first began writing arrangements for Bing, he set out to discover what Bing's low note was. Today, Bing sings in the range which is most comfortable for him, which is roughly from G to C.

The people who are fortunate enough to get seats during Bing's recording sessions [for his radio programs] at CBS see him as he really is. Invariably, he wears one of the flamboyant sport shirts which have become his trademark. Seldom does he wear "his hair," although he usually hides its absence under a jaunty Tyrolean hat or a sporty golf cap. Except for his own sessions before the mike, he spends most of the show comfortably perched on a high kitchen stool, humming to himself while his guests perform their numbers. As he finishes with each page of script, he lets it float casually to the floor. More often than not, he chews gum. which he rolls under his tongue when he gets up to sing his song. Unless there is business to detain him. Bing is the first person out of the studio. He hurries to the parking lot, waves at the autograph seekers at the gate, and drives home.

This year, Bing probably will originate more of his shows from army camps, principally from sprawling Fort Ord, which is 12 miles from Bing's home on the Monterey Peninsula. Bing has always received a great personal lift from entertaining servicemen. During his most recent appearance at Fort Ord, he confidentially told his appreciative Army audience, "It's almost a shame to take Chesterfield's money for doing a show like this."

As the nation's leading recording artist, Bing Crosby is the keystone of the Decca Record Company. Many of Bing's popular numbers have cleared the 1,000,000 mark, including last year's "Sam's Song," which introduced his 17-year-old son, Gary. All of his boys appeared with Bing on "A Crosby Christmas," a medley of three Johnny Burke - Jimmy Van Heusen songs, which has already sold nearly 600,000 and probably will get a large sale again next Christmas.



Bing averages between 30 and 40 new recordings each year, of which approximately one third are songs from his motion pictures. The remainder is made up of current hit songs and old tunes which are enjoying a new vogue. Each recording is supervised by Joe Perry, who has worked with Bing since 1931.

"Of all the artists I have worked with in 20 odd years," says Perry, "Bing is the easiest and fastest to make records with.

Bing probably holds the record for the fastest disc session of all time on his famous version of "Please," which was made while Bing was appearing at the RKO Pantages Theater in San Francisco. Bing ran out of the theater into a waiting cab, drove to the Decca offices on Mission Street, rode up three floors to the recording studio, made the record with Eddie Lang and Anson Weeks' orchestra, then hurried back to the theater. Time elapsed: one and a half hours.

"Please" was one of Crosby's most popular records. As with dozens of his songs, Bing's inherent sense of phrasing gave it the unique Crosby stamp, hurry or no hurry.

Bing has the approval of all the songs which he records for Decca, and he will refuse to do any song that he doesn't like. He particularly dislikes love songs which have a mawkish melody or an over-sentimental lyric, and that, perhaps more than anything else, is the reason for the great success of Johnny Burke and Jimmy Van Heusen, who write the majority of Bing's songs for motion pictures.

"When we do a song, people don't say that it's a typical Burke - Van Heusen song, says Johnny Burke, who has been associated with the Old Groaner since 1936. "Instead, they say it's a typical Crosby song. We're proud of that."

Few people realize how closely the songs which Bing has sung are patterned after his own, very individual personality.

"When Bing makes love with a song, he wants to do it in the same imaginative, casual way he would talk to his kids, or to a friend," says Burke. "In his songs, he never goes overboard for a girl, or drips with sentiment. In every Crosby picture there is at least one song which presents Bing as a guy without a tie, who is completely at ease, and enjoying himself as most people would like to enjoy themselves. Songs like 'Pennies from Heaven,' 'I Haven't Time to Be a Millionaire,' and 'I've Got a Pocketful of Dreams.' They are songs that instantly make you think of Bing."

Johnny Burke first came out from New York to write songs for *Pennies from Heaven* and arrived at Paramount while Bing was making *Rhythm on the Range*. They briefly exchanged greetings and Johnny went to work immediately writing the love song with Arthur Johnston. The number was "And So Do I."

"I'll never forget the day that Arthur and I went out to the set to play the song for Bing. He was wearing a cowboy outfit, and he followed us over to the piano in the corner of the sound stage. Arthur played the piano and I sang, scared half to death. When I finished, there was a moment of awful silence, before Bing said, 'Why, Johnny, that's poetry.' Then he turned and walked away. He never did say whether he liked it or not, but those were the sweetest words I'd ever heard."

When Burke and Van Heusen joined forces in 1940, it was the beginning of an ideal marriage of words and music.

"I'll never forget the first time Bing turned down one of my songs," Burke says. "It happened when he was making *If I Had My Way* at Universal. The director felt the score needed another ballad, a typical ballad. I took a ballad named 'Only Forever' over to the studio and played it for Bing, the script writer, the director, the head of the studio, and several others. When I finished, they all looked at Bing. Someone asked him, 'What do you think?' 'I don't know,' he said, looking unhappy. 'We don't really need a song like that.' 'That's what I thought,' said the studio head. 'Let's forget it.' I felt horrible. It was the first time in four years Bing had turned down a song of ours. Then, on the way out, Bing stopped me and, lowering his voice, said, 'That song's terrific, but they don't need it. Let's save it for the next show.' So it went into *Rhythm on the River* and was a big hit."

Nearly ten years ago, Bing Crosby was accounted one of the wealthiest men in show business. Today that opinion is an established fact. By virtue of his business acumen alone, Bing Crosby is the success story of our entire generation.

For many years, Bing's annual gross income from records, radio, and films, has been estimated at more than $1,000,000. But in addition to this Bing derives a large part of his income from a heavily-producing oil field in Scurry County, Texas. He also is associated with the Union Oil Company and the Doheny family in other Texas oil leases. He owns a 20,000 acre cattle ranch near Elko, Nevada, and a part interest in another cattle ranch in the Argentine. His real estate holdings include the modern three-story Crosby Building on the Sunset Strip, co-ownership of the Binglin Stables, which currently has 12 horses in training at Santa Anita, and more than 50 more in breeding stock and yearlings. He owns considerable stock in "Minute Maid" frozen orange juice concentrate. He also owns what he refers to as a "talking interest" in the Los Angeles Rams football team, the Hollywood stars baseball team, and the Pittsburgh Pirates.

In addition, Bing has an interest, with his boys, in Crosby Enterprises, Inc., and the Crosby Research

Foundation. The latter was established during the war to encourage the development of products vital to the war effort. The Research Foundation shares in the profits of many items which it helped to place on the market, including a burn remedy named Hydrosulphosol now in use in Korea; the Breathalator, which effectively minimizes bad breath; the Shavex, a solenoid which converts electric razors from AC to DC current; transparent plastic raincoats; Dentacake, a traveling kit of toothpaste and brush; the Colby pocket lighter; a fire exit lock that precludes fire disasters; a nylon dip which makes it possible to wash nylons and woolens in cold water; and numerous other products.

John O'Melveny at work

Since 1933, the majority of Bing's vast business interests have been managed by John O'Melveny. "Since the beginning of our relationship, Bing has had complete confidence in me," says O'Melveny . "I have a tremendous amount of responsibility entrusted to me in holding his power of attorney. Some weeks I sign more papers than most people sign in a year. I don't think he even bothers to look at the legal documents I send him."

For a number of years, O'Melveny has been the appointed guardian of the four Crosby boys, whose business accounts he runs under the authority of the Superior Court. At present it is estimated that the boys are worth the following:

Gary, $194,157; Philip, $193,854; Dennis, $193,830; and Lindsay, $198,355. But until they are of age, they will continue to earn their spending money by working during the summer months as cowhands on the ranch at Elko, Nevada.

"Bing's earning power didn't amount to much when he was a romantic lover type," says O'Melveny. "But it will continue to grow from now on in direct proportion to the people's love of the characteristics that he is now able to reveal on the screen . . . those of an amiable, well-balanced human being . . . in short, those of his own personality."

In recent years, many people have wondered when Bing would get tired of his busy schedule and call it a day. If he had been unable to record his radio show, Bing undoubtedly would have dropped that confining phase of his activities long ago. Shortly before making *Going My Way*, he told a friend, "When he is past 40, any man in show business should begin to realize that he's through, I don't believe I can do any more pictures that people would believe me in." Since then, however, he has been the top box-office attraction at his studio. As for singing, Bing will never stop. As an old friend of his salad days recently put it.

"Bing quit singing? Why, that man will still have the best beat in the world when he's a hundred years old. "

Bert Bishop's
BING ON THE BOX

It's a pleasure to report a definite upturn for all things Crosby on the small screen during these past four months. Both here and in the USA a week hasn't passed without either a Bing film or documentary being televised. Albeit, much of this has been on Satellite or Cable channels, in fact about three weeks ago there were simultaneous screenings of *Robin And The 7 Hoods* and *Going My Way* on U.K. Sky channels. When did you last have the chance to channel hop and see two Crosby movies? Strangely, though, Road movies were notable by their absence.

The USA's AMC Channel featured *The Country Girl*, with Fox Movie Channel and Cinemax giving us *Let's Make Love* and *High Time*. Other guest spots on Flix and Starz also included *The Princess And The Pirate* and Bob Hope's western sequel, *Son Of Paleface*.

Alas, if you were looking for something pre-1942 you'd have been out of luck. The only exception - a regular on TCM, as Wig has already highlighted - is *Going Hollywood* which crops up on the Turner Classic Movies channel from time to time both here and in the States. Otherwise *Holiday Inn* fills the '42 spot, with the two Father O'Malley movies, *Going My Way* and *The Bells Of St. Mary's* not far behind in the black & white era. *A Connecticut Yankee* had a couple of airings, and a further three films in four days on Sky; *Riding High*, *Robin And The 7 Hoods* and *That's Entertainment*, all shown twice during the day, might well have been enough to satisfy most Bingophiles. But the icing on the cake was a double helping of the 1956 version of *Anything Goes!* A major event for me, as I'd only ever seen a many-generations-down-the-line dubbing on video.

This film is unique in that it's principal star appeared in the first cinematic version twenty years earlier but, like many musicals, was preceded by an original Broadway production which first saw the light of day [or in this case, night] on 21st November 1934. Keith Parkinson has already covered Bing's 1936 film in depth in his *Celluloid Crosby* section and I hope you'll forgive me if I consider the 1956 version in detail too. Cole Porter was responsible for one of the all-time great scores, which survive in entirety for the 1956 version. No less than five Porter numbers plus the same composer's "It's De-Lovely" from the 1936 Broadway musical *Red Hot And Blue*. Even Bing's first film, for Paramount, produced just a year later than the stage production, couldn't boast that. Although "My Heart And I", "Sailor Beware" and "Moonburn" more than made up for the deficiency in the best possible way. Given the choice between those classic Crosby numbers and the comedy routines of "Ya Gotta Give The People Hoke" and "A Second-Hand Turban And A Crystal Ball" there is really no contest. Those extended 'bits of bizness' were penned by the formidable team of Sammy Cahn and Jimmy Van Heusen, who also wrote the speciality number, "Bounce Right Back", for Bing's 'small fry' confrere, Donald O'Connor, to perform for a group of youngsters on board ship. For once Bing missed out with the bambinos, but was to 'bounce right back' himself a year or two later with another Cahn-Van Heusen cinematic slice of philosophy for children; "Don't Be A Do-Badder" featured in *Robin And The 7 Hoods*.

The original story was penned by Guy Bolton and P. G. Wodehouse and was set around a shipwreck at sea. However, a real life maritime tragedy, shortly before the opening of the stage production, called for a major re-write and what survives follows much the same pattern of a small-time villain trying to avoid a pursuing officer of the law on board a liner bound for the States, with a secondary plot of shipboard romance. In this musical version though, the secondary plot becomes the principle scenario and is pluralized by a double romance between Bing and Zizi Jeanmaire with Donald O'Connor falling for the undoubted charms of Mitzi Gaynor whose father has been guilty of an indictable misdemeanor. It's all familiar, cosy stuff, and even the black sheep of the family is further sanitized by making his crime just a little matter of revenue fraud. A role played by Phil Harris, whose friendship with Bing no doubt landed him the part, as in *Here Comes The Groom* - or is that being too cynical?

Bing romances Zizi whilst Donald and Mitzi make sweet music together

Mitzi Gaynor gets the title tune early on in a lavish song and dance routine, at which, as always, she excelled. However, I was surprised to note the lyric change, which gave us;

'Good authors, too, who once knew better words,
now
only use three-letter words writing prose. Anything
goes.'

Bing, too, also succumbed to that tip-toeing through the lyric in his 1957 air-shot rendition [later released in the Ken Barnes collection] wherein the apparently offending line was altered, quite clumsily and meaninglessly, to 'now only use short-letter words'. Amazing! Surely those responsible must have realized that Cole Porter's 'four-letter words' lyric referred not to swear words but a general decline in writing talent and disregard for the boundless breadth and elegance of the English language.

But back to the film. For me the best sequence revolved around "You're The Top", in which all four principles performed, as two couples, in separate though adjacent locations. Full rein was given to the extensively clever lyrics, though even here it was felt necessary to expurgate that part of the lyric which, originally, gave us 'If fast cars you like/If low bars you like/If old hymns you like / If bare limbs you like /If Mae West you like/Or me undressed you like/ Why, nobody will oppose.' But, apparently, somebody did.

O'Connor partnered Jeanmaire in this number while Bing duetted with Mitzi Gaynor, almost equaling his previous duet with Ethel Merman in which his voice takes on the quality of a virtuoso performance on a musical instrument.

"I Get A Kick Out Of You" was entirely devoted to Zizi Jeanmaire [and dance company] whose singing voice, despite the French accent, I found less than appealing. Indeed, the ultra modern choreography that they performed was such that I half expected the great Gene Kelly to come sliding across the stage on his knees, arms outstretched in a supplication to equal his enthusiastic verve and talent. However, Zizi's enthusiasm was reserved for Mr. Crosby, and her determination to snare him as a lover encouraged Bing to serenade her, topsides, with "All Through The Night" which, although rather too obviously mimed, he delivered in his very best low key, 'Fifties baritone voice.

"It's De-Lovely" is yet another imaginative Cole Porter song, of great charm, and it was performed to near perfection by the two young lovers up on deck, in the moonlight, before problems arising within the plot disrupted the path of true love. The difficulty being that both Bing and Donald, unbeknownst to each other, had each signed the two girls as a leading lady for their new show. But all comes right in the end, naturally, and within two years of serving a short jail sentence Phil Harris is in a Broadway theatre box seat revelling in the sights and sounds of his daughter performing, with her three fellow artistes a spirited rendition of "Blow, Gabriel, Blow". A rousing finish upon which to bring down the VistaVision curtain.

Blue Skies or *White Christmas* this was not, but I have to say that it was an enjoyable and valiant attempt to keep the film musical flag flying at a time when television was making serious inroads into cinema audiences. The quality of film making did recover but, sadly, as we all know, movie musicals went into terminal decline.

SAINTS BE PRAISED!

There can be hardly a record programme in the world that doesn't feature tracks from Bing's considerable collection of songs slanted towards the Emerald Isle on the occasion of the most famous of all the Patron Saints anniversary. And from that land even further across the sea, that has a huge Irish immigrant population, we heard from Greg Van Beek guesting on Ronnie Paul's Flying Home big band programme, which goes out on KAAT Radio FM103 from Fresno, California.

A regular on this 'our kind of music' broadcast, Greg supplied his host with a nice mix of relevant songs which included the haunting "Isle Of Innisfree" and the rousingly amusing "Clancy Lowered The Boom" duet with the Jack Benny Show regular, Dennis Day, lifted from a March 1949 Philco show.

Greg put in another appearance on Flying Home on the 25th May to help celebrate Memorial Day and Bob Hope's impending 99th birthday. A considerable segment from a 1968 Madison Square Gardens TV special was featured on which Bing was Bob's guest where they alternate on each other's songs in a mixture of music and mirth; with a follow up of "Chicago Style" and, inevitably, "Road To Morocco". Greg was able to promote BINGANG and the ICC as well as the forthcoming Bing Crosby Hofstra University Conference in Hempstead, New York, this November. News of several DVD releases of Bing movies, including a nice box set of the first four Road films, also received useful publicity on Ronnie Paul's programme.

Our own Desmond Carrington remembered the occasion with "Top O' the Morning" as a programme opener, while Chris Robinson turned to the wireless for "That Tumbledown Shack In Athlone", followed by "Eileen" and "Did Your Mother Come From Ireland?" Bristol's David Lowe chipped in with "I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen" and meanwhile, down there in Kent, Bill Rennells continues to feature Bing in a seemingly inexhaustible recorded repertoire of Crosby songs ranging alphabetically from "After Sundown" to

"Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah". Slotted in there was an air-shot from early Kraft of "Remember Me" on which Bing was having some difficulty in finding his key as he fooled around, musically, with Constance Bennett and her rather 'lived in' voice. Bill also came up with the popular "Isle Of Innisfree" as the Celtic connection. In fact, as is usually the case, all the British presenters gave Bing extra special air-time for the Irish Apostle's Feast Day.

99 AND COUNTING

Another annual event - Bing's Birthday - was cause for recognition. Next year will be a special occasion, which, it is hoped, will be recognized throughout the entertainment world. Meanwhile, for the penultimate year to the centennial, Radio Derby's Memorable Melodies was to the forefront with a nice tribute. 'Does he really need an introduction?" stated host Mike Carey as he pressed the play button on "Manhattan". From a CD sent in by Arthur Blood, Mike was to feature the Brown-Freed composition, "Would You", "All You Want To Do Is Dance", "Let Me Whisper I Love You" and, later, and possibly for the first time on air, Bing and Betty Hutton duetting "I Promise You" from the soundtrack of *Here Come The Waves*. Our very own 'Stan the man' had Bill Rennells playing "It's Anybody's Spring", and Barnsey chipped in with the multi-artiste 12" recording of "Pennies From Heaven", plus two further examples of Bing with Jimmy Dorsey; the KMH version of "Some Of These Days" and the commercial release of "Shoe Shine Boy" - all great examples of the jazzin' Bing Crosby as Paul was to note. With a reminder of the event from Maggie Ryan, Dewi Griffiths gave a very nice birthday tribute with a résumé of the Old Groaner's career, the recording of "I'm A Dreamer, Aren't We All?" and Bing with brother Bob on the 1940 million seller, "San Antonio Rose". How fortunate for the Crosby cause that several of our members continue to provide an interesting variety of Crosbyana for the record spinners, bringing to the attention of listeners everywhere a new slant or a different face to the normally perceived image of Bing on record.

To celebrate the occasion Gerald Jackson treated his Northern Network to the intriguing and lightly operatic "Accidents Will Happen" which Bing duetted with Dorothy Kirsten in the film *Mr. Music*, a movie made not long after his appendix operation. Up there in bonnie Scotland our nationally broadcast *Say It With Music* host noted the great similarity of "Sunflower" [which he played] to the music of "Hello Dolly". In fact there was an out of court settlement of some half a million dollars when "Sunflower's" composer, Mack Davis, sued Jerry Herman for plagiarism. Despite the cost to Dolly's proud parent, Herman must have made a mint out of the show and subsequent recording royalties. On slightly similar lines, but with no suggestion of pirating, Desmond also related how Cole Porter paid a cowboy $150 for the original poem of "Don't Fence Me In". A wonderful investment in view of the vast revenue it was to generate, and not just with the Bing and the Andrews Sisters' version. The song was penned for the unreleased 1930 film, *Adios Argentina*. In view of the fact that I'm typing this just as that country has been knocked out of football's World Cup, and although I'm not a footie fan, it seemed appropriate to mention the connection!

Finally, from California, we had news of a two hour Birthday tribute for Bing presented by Larry Gunn on the Sacramento station KCFA (www.kcfa.org) on May 3. Larry played Bing's first recording and a selection of his hits over the years, finishing with "Once In A While".

OH MISTER MERCER!

During April, BBC Radio2 came up with an excellent four-part broadcast on the talented Johnny Mercer in a series entitled *Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate The Positive*, and I'm indebted to member Dennis Saville for taping the programme. Related by Sir Richard Rodney Bennett, the programme was compiled and written by Russell Davies of *Classics And Curiosities* fame. Mercer was among the very best lyricists, his internal rhyming was brilliant, and he was responsible for many enduring ballads, including "Laura" [possibly his most famous], "Autumn Leaves", "Dream" and "Moon River".

Many that he wrote were performed by Bing, including "You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby", "I'm An Old Cowhand", "Skylark", "Too Marvellous For Words", "Spring, Spring, Spring", "You've Got Me Where You Want Me" and, of course, the programme's title, some of which were heard over the four week period.

DECCA
PERSONALITY SERIES
REG. U.S. PAT. OFF. MARCA REGISTRADA
MANUFACTURED BY DECCA RECORDS, INC., NEW YORK, U.S.A.
(L 3485)
Vocal Duet with Orchestra Directed by Joseph Lilley
YOU'VE GOT ME WHERE YOU WANT ME
(Harry Warren-Johnny Mercer)
BING CROSBY and JUDY GARLAND
23410 B

Being a featured singer with Benny Goodman, and teaming up with Bob Crosby in a radio regular, it was inevitable that Mercer would sing with Bing. Their most famous duet is undoubtedly "Small Fry", of which he is part composer, followed by "Mr. Gallagher And Mr. Shean" of which he was not. But "Mister Meadowlark" has to be one of his wittiest lyrics and remains a personal favourite.

He was to say of Bing; 'He was a terrific rhythm singer as well a being a first class ballad singer. But what was better than that, he had a great rapport. He made you feel at home, and his ad libs were great!'

Bing and Johnny had social friendship in those earlier years, but Mercer's biographer put an entirely different slant on their relationship:

'Basically, Johnny didn't like Crosby. I never met anybody who knew him who did. I think Johnny was capable of a certain amount of professional hypocrisy. If it was good for his career to record with Crosby, he did it. Ginger [Mercer's wife] dated Crosby back in New York and she always shoved in Johnny's face how much money the Crosbys had.'

Despite his excessive drinking, and a full-scale affair with Judy Garland for whom he reputedly wrote "That Old Black Magic", with it's coded lyric, his marriage endured to the end; dying of a brain tumour just a year before Bing. Bing was always full of praise for Johnny, and on the programme was heard to relate how, after Mercer's enrichment, and even though he had no obligation to do so, he returned home to settle considerable debts that his father had left behind on his demise. "The Pleasure Of Your Company" was their final duet and neatly sums up a happy and fruitful relationship, which Keith Parkinson has documented in his column this time around.

AND THE ANGEL SINGS

News that Jim Reilly is easing off his ICC workload comes at a time when his promotion of Bing on his local, Angel Radio has increased considerably. This column has reported his Bing programmes over the last year or two, and this time around is no exception. Due to the uncertainty of Angel Radio's future it was decided to have Bing's centenary year celebration one year in advance, which Jim organized of course. Over seventy songs, plus two complete KMH shows were played with listeners invited to send in their requests, with more still coming in the next day.

Jim does a broadcast of one hour every Thursday evening, and a two hour 'live' programme with Martin Kirby, the programme controller, every Sunday morning.

A further two hours on alternate Saturday evenings, also 'live' will give you some idea of the scope of Jim's 'new career'. Live broadcasting must be a bit of a nightmare, but it adds to the charm and spontaneity for the listeners, with a few laughs for the presenters no doubt!

Such is Jim's influence, all the other presenters, volunteers to a man, played a Crosby track or two, and on the Station Manager's programme, Scatterbrain', nearly every other record was a Bing song.

I have a list here of all the songs featured, and a glance over it reveals a very representative collection of great recordings from 1931 through to the most recent years still outside of copyright control. A cut off point necessary for a self-funding radio station. To mention any of the song titles would suggest those not mentioned as unworthy, which is patently untrue. But if just one title is to be recorded here it has to be "Brother, Can You Spare A Dime" - which should be a timely reminder to all the listeners in the Borough of Havant catchment area to dig deep and keep this worthwhile radio station on air for the foreseeable future.

LAWYERS ALL

Swing To Romance forms a part of Henry Ayrton's Real Music Show on Humberside, and Bing puts in frequent appearances with many an interesting aside. "The deal of the century" noted Henry on playing "I Found A Million Dollar Baby in a five and ten cent store." In a short treatise on composers Leo Robin and Ralph Rainger, who collaborated on many of Bing's songs until Rainger was killed in a plane crash in 1942, it transpired that, like Bing, both were destined for the legal profession until the entertainment bug bit them. What a loss to the world the original decision of all three would have been! "Please" was a perfect illustration of their contribution to the Crosby portfolio; but just consider their score to *Here Is My Heart* and a couple of the *Big Broadcast* pictures.

In later editions of his programme Henry was to give a spin to "Bob White", the 'Pigtails' number, "Watermelon Weather" and the million seller that became a hit with airmen everywhere, "Trade Winds".

BACK ROW PUNDIT

With *Gold For Grown Ups* we kick off with yet another song written for a Broadway musical which later found greater, and enduring, fame in a Bing film, namely, "Well, Did You Evah?" As Paul pointed out this song was first featured in the 1939 stage production *DuBarry Was A Lady* and was duetted by Betty Grable and Charles Walters. Although still a Cole Porter number it's the only song in *High Society* not written especially for the film.

Performed by Bing and Frank, with revised lyrics, it was one of several musical success stories for the picture and it always comes as a great surprise that critics dismiss the film almost out of hand. The radio programme Back Row was no exception. 'Compared to *Philadelphia Story*, both the original play and the film, *High Society* is vastly inferior, an ersatz remake; and although it has a plus side of a Cole Porter score, even that is far from his best.' Well, that was the opinion of the Saturday afternoon film programme, and further detrimental comments were to follow. Among other topics the programme was promoting the release, at selected cinemas, of the musical version (which has already been covered earlier in the magazine by our Editor) and advising listeners that *Philadelphia Story* is available on video. It's my opinion that each should be enjoyed on its merits and it is clear what the general public think of *High Society*. This is no denigration of the Grant-Stewart-Hepburn classic, which was a wonderful movie. But if *High Society* wasn't both entertaining and popular why is now being released for cinema screening once again? Added to which it must be noted that it is the most repeated film, of any genre, on satellite television in the U.K. The magic ingredient that makes a movie memorable is often indefinable, but the reality, as far as the industry is concerned, is success at the box-office, and *High Society* has to be one of MGM's great commercial success stories.

MONTH BY MONTH

But back to Barnsey. As is always the case at the turn of each month Paul describes the Crosby official calendar and plays representative music. In playing "Welcome To My Dream" he cheekily noted Dottie's *décolletage* in the accompanying photograph and was to feature further tracks as the weeks and months passed by, often deviating from the obvious by playing similar titles from wireless broadcasts. Though, for once, "On A Slow Boat To China" was the Bing and Rosie commercial release, as shown for April, rather than the Peggy Lee Philco duet which Paul prefers.

It was left to Paul to convey the news of the death of broadcaster, Jim Moore. Of transatlantic origin, Jim was 'a man of considerable erudition, insight and wit when it came to the discussion of popular music' said Paul. Jim contributed to several programmes in the East of England area and had his own monthly show on Radio Cambridgeshire, where Bing had some recognition from time to time. To point up this fact, Stan White sent me a reprise of Jim relating on his own programme how, from a pirated source, he was able to supply MCA with a copy of their own original, "Blue Shadows And White Gardenias" for a Crosby compilation that he was invited to choose a track for. Jim then played this lovely Mack Gordon - Harry Owens 1942 recording on which Bing is accompanied by the Victor Young orchestra. The demise of a professional broadcaster who is in tune to our kind of music is always a sad occasion. But none more so, of course, than to his widow and family to whom this column expresses sympathy.

By hearing in one of Paul's more recent programmes the duet of "Sugar" the opportunity arises to hark back to my Webster's Dictionary query in a previous issue as to how many songs mention this tome. Three so far, as it does occur in this Pinkard-Alexander-Mitchell song, though not sung here by Bing and Satch. On a CD of Lee Wiley that I have, she obliges with the verse:

'Have you heard what I've done? Found a word,
just the one
That makes a better name for one I used to call my
baby doll.
It ain't new, it ain't old, If you do what you are
told,
You'll find the answer if you look, in Mr. Webster's
Dictionary book.
The word is 'sugar', I call my baby my sugar ...'

Any advance on three?

Wingy Manone's birthday was observed and coinciding, as it did, with the release of the most recent Jasmine *Going Hollywood* Volume 3 double CD, Paul was able to play the soundtrack version of "Rhythm On The River" in which Bing leads Wingy's band out of the pawn shop in the film of the same name. And drawing from the same album a rare outing for "Old Glory", possibly the first time ever for this soundtrack version on to which Geoff Milne has carefully stitched the concluding bars of a radio broadcast version in order to overcome the problem of the intruding dialogue between Betty Hutton, Eddie Bracken and Victor Moore at the conclusion of the *Star Spangled Rhythm* movie.

There's often controversy on his programme as to whether there's too much Crosby featured. Paul points out, frequently, that there are really five Crosbys, more or less one for each decade of his career and that the number of bands and performers he sang with more than justify his regular inclusion. However, Barnsey asked for listener's opinion and it would seem that most felt the Crosby content about right. My own email to the programme was to that effect as I feel it is better to stimulate and enlighten by moderation than devalue by excess.

SAGA RADIO

In the UK, there is a concern called Saga which caters for the needs of those of us over 50. Saga have launched a radio station which broadcasts music for the mature tastes such as ours. This can be heard over the Internet at www.saga.co.uk/radio and also on Sky TV - channel 882, plus in the West Midlands of England on 105.7 FM. There is also a separate digital transmission for London, Edinburgh and Glasgow. Saga will be launching a station in the East Midlands soon on 106.6 FM. Those of you in the USA and Canada who have access to the Internet, may find it of interest. Stan White has made contact with the station and will be supplying Bing CDs to them.

Bert Bishop June 2002

(Editor: Thanks Bert for a most interesting and educated review of the Bing scene on radio & TV. I can echo the comments about Jim Reilly's work on Angel Radio as Ted Laker, who lives in that area, wrote:
"We are certainly lucky in having such a station on our doorstep, and with knowledgeable Jim Reilly as anchor with Crosby material, their Bing Crosby Day on May 3 was a great success. Whether prompted or not, every day finds Bing booming out as the requests pour in - bearing out my theory that when allowed to, listeners will request Bing's records, rather than the restrictions placed on records of certain vintage by the BBC, where he appears to be thought of as 'uncool' whatever that means."

Finally, on the subject of radio, may I give details of a new service which may be of interest to our readers outside the UK who have access to the Internet. Bert often mentions programmes on the BBC's Radio2, a nationwide network carrying several shows which often feature Bing. It is now possible to access these shows at any time by going to www.bbc.co.uk/radio2 and then selecting 'playback'. The BBC leaves shows on the site for a week after their original broadcast so why not pick out "Desmond Carrington" or "Russell Davies" or even "David Jacobs Collection" and see what Bert is talking about!)

ONCE IN A WHILE

Personalities associated with Bing who have died since our last issue was prepared include:

Billy Wilder, the creator of such classic American films as "Some Like it Hot" and "Sunset Boulevard," died "peacefully" at the age of 95 on March 27 at his Beverly Hills home. Wilder was a master storyteller specialising in the dark side of American life with a cynicism and black humour few movie-makers have ever matched. Although he spoke with a heavy accent and only learned English after arriving in Hollywood penniless in the 1930s, Wilder was a master of dialogue. He called his English "a mixture between Arnold Schwarzenegger and Archbishop Tutu." He created some of Hollywood's most famous dramas including "Double Indemnity," "The Lost Weekend," "Sunset Boulevard" and "Stalag 17" - as well as some of its funniest farces: "Some Like It Hot" and "The Fortune Cookie." He was also first to pair Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau, creating one of the screen's most beloved comic teams. Wilder received 21 Academy Award nominations and won six Oscars. Three of them - best director, best screenplay and best picture - were for "The Apartment" in 1960, making him the first filmmaker to win three Oscars in a year.

Wilder was born Samuel Wilder on June 22, 1906, in the Polish town of Sucha, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. His mother nicknamed him Billy after western hero Buffalo Bill. In 1924, after briefly attending the University of Vienna, Wilder landed a job as a crossword puzzle editor and police reporter. His aggressive journalism led him to Berlin. Enchanted by its film community, he decided to become a moviemaker but first he did a stint at a Berlin hotel as an escort dancer for elderly women. That experience may have years later given birth to the central motif of "Sunset Boulevard," a young writer being kept by a far older woman.

His first screen credit came for "People on Sunday" (1929), a documentary. He was to write or collaborate on 20 films in Germany before fleeing in 1933 from the Nazis - his mother, stepfather and grandfather died in concentration camps. He wanted to buy the book "Schindler's List" but Steven Spielberg got it instead and Spielberg later credited Wilder with getting him to make the movie - one which Wilder loved.

In 1938, he began working with screenwriter Charles Brackett, the start of a 22-year collaboration that included such hit comedies as "Midnight"

(1939), "Ninotchka," starring Greta Garbo (1939) and "Ball of Fire" (1941). The pair switched to drama with the anti-Nazi war drama "Five Graves to Cairo" (1943), "Double Indemnity" (1944) and "The Lost Weekend" (1945), one of Hollywood's first looks at alcoholism. "The Lost Weekend," which earned four Academy Awards, including the one for Best Picture, won Wilder Oscars for directing and co-writing.

His main interaction with Bing came with the film "The Emperor Waltz" in 1946 although Bing's film "Rhythm On The River" had a screenplay which was adapted from a story by Wilder and Jacques Thery. "The Emperor Waltz" was not a great success critically or commercially and Wilder seldom spoke about it in later years which is a pity because your Editor thoroughly enjoyed it. Jasper Park in Canada was used for the location filming but despite the natural beauty Wilder spent heavily on improving the scenery with the result that the film cost $4 million, some $1.2 million over budget. Billy Wilder also had a small involvement in Bing's film "Welcome Stranger" which was directed by Elliott Nugent. Nugent himself played a "Dr. White" in one scene and Wilder directed this without receiving a credit.

Bing and Billy Wilder on the set of "The Emperor Waltz"

Wilder was back on the award podium for "Sunset Boulevard" (1950). He and Brackett shared an Oscar for best screenplay, although it was in the course of that movie that Wilder decided to dump Brackett as a collaborator. He followed up with two movies based on popular plays, "Stalag 17" (1953) and "Sabrina" (1954). Marilyn Monroe then sizzled in two of Wilder's hottest comedies, "The Seven Year Itch" (1955) and "Some Like It Hot" (1959), with Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon and co-written with his new partner, I. A. L. Diamond, with whom he would work for over 25 years.

In 1960, Wilder and Diamond hit the comic heights with "The Apartment," Wilder's triple-play Oscar winner starring Lemmon and Shirley MacLaine. Wilder worked with MacLaine again in "Irma La Douce" (1963) and recruited Lemmon for "The Fortune Cookie" (1966), which began the Lemmon-Walter Matthau team.

Wilder and his first wife, Judith, were married in 1936 and had a daughter, Judith. They were divorced in 1947. He married Audrey Young, an actress and singer, in 1949.

Bing discussed Billy Wilder in an interview with Pete Martin in 1961 and he had this to say:
"He's a great conversationalist. He's been in the business ever since he was a very young fellow. His roots go back to Ernst Lubitsch. He started with him at UFA, and he has complete recall. Billy can remember everything, and he puts it, shall we say, pithily. He's known everybody. He's made great pictures. He's always being put up for another Academy Award. And the way he works would be interesting. He's a hell of a talented fellow. He produces his own pictures, co-writes them, directs them. He's very volatile. And voluble."

Milton Berle, the acerbic, cigar-smoking vaudevillian who eagerly embraced a new medium and became "Mr. Television" when the technology was in its infancy, died on March 28. He was 93. Berle was diagnosed with colon cancer last year and was under hospice care for the last few weeks of his life.

Born Mendel Berlinger in New York's Harlem on July 12, 1908, his first taste of show business came at age 5, when he won a vaudeville contest by imitating Charlie Chaplin. Soon he was doing child leads in films with Mary Pickford and Mabel Normand, and was the kid rescued from the railroad tracks in the nick of time in the Pearl White movies. His Broadway debut came in 1920 and by 1936, Berle was a headliner with the Ziegfeld Follies. He played a long run with Earl Carroll's Vanities and began bringing his brand of humor to radio with guest spots on humor shows. He also appeared in several minor film comedies, such as "New Faces of 1937" and 1949's "Always Leave Them Laughing" (based on his autobiography). But he never really made it on the big screen.

Then came the advent of television. Berle was signed as host of the first show of a variety series -

the "Texaco Star Theater." He was supposed to alternate with several other hosts, but Berle drew so much fan mail that NBC soon gave him the spot permanently. Berle's hour-long "Texaco Star Theater" began June 8, 1948, and was renamed "The Milton Berle Show" before it ended in June 1956. He won an Emmy for the program, which was truly his own. If the audience thought he looked funny in a dress, Berle was happy to oblige, and skits in drag became a trademark. The NBC program's popularity spurred sales of television sets and helped make TV a medium for the masses. Berle was called the "Thief of Bad Gags" and even joked about stealing quips. "I laughed so hard I nearly dropped my pencil,"" he once said of a rival comedian, and he stopped at nothing for a laugh. In his debut season in 1948, Berle's show was watched on four out of every five sets in the nation, and he was the new medium's highest-paid funny man.

Milton Berle with Bing on a 1967 Hollywood Palace show.

He made more movies in the 1960s, notably "It's a Mad Mad Mad Mad World" in 1963. Berle married, divorced and remarried show girl Joyce Matthews, and they adopted a daughter, Vicki. Their second marriage lasted six years. In 1953 Berle married former publicist Ruth Cosgrove. They had an adopted son, Bill. She died in 1989, and Berle married fashion designer Lorna Adams in 1991.

As far as is known, Bing first worked with Milton when they appeared together at the Capitol Theater, New York in March 1933 and then there was a long gap until October 8, 1942 when Berle guested on Bing's Kraft Music Hall. Milton was the MC when Bing was presented with a "GI Oscar" on June 10, 1945 and their final work together was on the Hollywood Palace show of September 5, 1967.

Dave King, comedian, singer and actor, died on April 15, 2002, aged 72. Few British comedians were as successful in the 1950s and early 1960s as Dave King; he became one of the first British acts to top the bill at the London Palladium, had his own shows on both British and American television and a useful chart career as well. But perhaps most remarkable was that when King's golden touch disappeared, he reinvented himself and became a respected screen actor. He played villains in a number of television dramas before being cast against type as a police inspector in Dennis Potter's *Pennies from Heaven*.

In the mid-1950s King was pursuing a solo career. With his laid-back style and his songs in the style of Perry Como, he began to make appearances in television variety shows, and in 1955 he was given his own series by the BBC. An innovative comedian with brilliant timing, he had a madcap and ground-breaking show that was scripted by the top gag writers of the day. He would engage in banter with the BBC announcers - something previously unheard of - and his humour had something in common with his American contemporaries such as Jackie Gleason and Sid Caesar.

Dave King with Bing and Marion Ryan on the 1961 Christmas Show.

His hour-long show was famous for its sketches, and in particular for his take-offs of famous Hollywood films and genres long before the advent of later stars such as Stanley Baxter. He would, for instance, send up westerns, or war films - winning the war single-handed - and inevitably any movie featuring Bing, of whom he did a very good imitation. In fact he and

Bing first worked together on the Rosemary Clooney Show televised live in the UK in August 1961 and part of this featured Bing and Dave singing together. King began his recording career in 1956 with a cover of the Dean Martin song "Memories are Made of This" which reached number 5 in the UK charts and followed this with minor hits such as "You Can't Be True to Two", "Christmas and You", and "The Story of My Life" (one of three versions of the Burt Bacharach song to make the UK Top 20 in 1958). In 1958 he was poached from the BBC by ITV, who in turn gave him his own show. A year later he was the Summer host of the Kraft Music Hall Show in America, replacing Milton Berle. In December, 1961 he appeared as a guest on Bing's Christmas show which was recorded in London having also made a cameo appearance as a restaurateur in *The Road to Hong Kong*. (That Christmas show has recently been issued on video by Festival Films - see 'Keeping Track'). Throughout the 1970s, Dave King gave a series of highly polished and gritty performances as a straight actor in several British television dramas, including *The Sweeney, The Professionals* and *Bergerac*, and he went on to feature in the original TV version of *Pennies from Heaven* (1978), with Bob Hoskins and Cheryl Campbell.

Sam Snead, one of the world's legendary golfers and the PGA Tour's most prolific title winner with 81 victories, died on May 23 at the age of 89. Born Samuel Jackson Snead on May 27, 1912 in Hot Springs. Virginia, Sam turned professional in 1934 and one of the first tournaments he won was the inaugural Bing Crosby Pro-Am in 1937. The first prize was $500 and it is said that Sam was not keen to have a cheque and asked for cash instead. He also won Bing's tournament in 1938 and 1941 as well as tieing for first place in 1950. Bing golfed with Sam on many occasions over the years and also he persuaded Sam to appear on his Kraft Music Hall show of January 29, 1942. Known as "Slammin' Sam", he collected 135 worldwide wins, including three Masters, three US PGA Championships and one British Open.

Sam Snead listens to one of Bing's stories

How Bing Helped Me Through The Night

The Scene. An R.A.A.F station at Cootamundra, a country town in the state of New South Wales on a cold and frosty night in mid winter 1944.

The Cast. A.C.I Charles Chapman just two weeks into my Basic Training course.

Being born and bred in an inner suburb of the city of Sydney, I had never seen a frost, I was finding out the hard way what cold was all about. With my trusty Lee Enfield 303 rifle with bayonet affixed, I was guarding a row of Beauford bombers. My imagination was running wild. What was that near the perimeter fence? Oh, I thought, it's only a wombat, there's a lot of them about in the night.

I gazed once more at the night sky, ablaze with stars. Stars I had never seen in the skies over Sydney, and my thoughts panned in on Bing, and his recording of 'Home On The Range', when he sang "How often at night when the heavens are bright, with the light from the glittering stars."

I looked across at the Guard House about 100 yards away, and thought of the Pot Belly stove, and the large pot of coffee simmering on the top, and the tempting bunk on which I soon hoped to recline. Then faintly through the cold night air came Bing's voice singing 'Lights Out Till Reveille' and so friends that's how Bing helped me through the night.

Charles Chapman (NSW)

Keeping Track

A Compact Disc Review

As you will have read earlier in the magazine, Jim Reilly is taking a well-deserved rest for the time being and, pending a proper replacement being found, it falls to your Editor to attempt to continue Jim's excellent CD reviews. There is a plethora of inexpensive Bing compilations this time around but first we can look at the marvellous CDs we have all been anxiously awaiting for so many months. The latest Jonzos! These were delayed originally due to the illness of the mastering engineer but John McNicholas hopes that we shall have several more issues this year as he tries to make up for lost time.

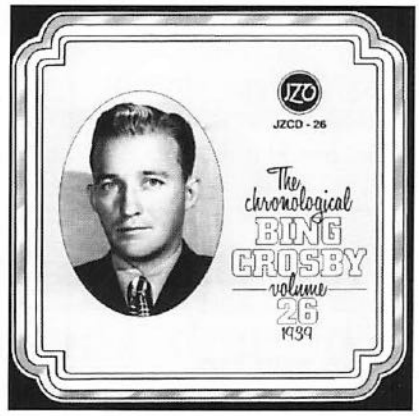
The Chronological Bing Crosby Vol. 26
June 13 - December 15, 1939

Jonzo Records JZCD 26 **UK**

1. To You Sweetheart Aloha
2. My Isle Of Golden Dreams
3. Maybe
4. Somebody Loves Me
5. Home On The Range
6. Start The Day Right (-A) (with Connie Boswell)
7. Start The Day Right (reject) (with Connie Boswell) *
8. An Apple For The Teacher (-A) (with Connie Boswell)
9. An Apple For The Teacher (-B) (with Connie Boswell) *
10. Neighbours In The Sky *
11. What's New?
12. Cynthia *
13. Medley Of Gus Edwards Song Hits
14. In My Merry Oldsmobile (-A)
15. In My Merry Oldsmobile (-B)
16. Ciribiribin (-A) (with The Andrews Sisters)
17. Ciribiribin (-B) (with The Andrews Sisters) *
18. Yodelin' Jive (reject) (with The Andrews Sisters) *
19. Yodelin' Jive (-B) (with The Andrews Sisters)
20. Too Romantic
21. The Moon And The Willow Tree
22. Sweet Potato Piper (-A)
23. Sweet Potato Piper (-B)
24. Between 18th & 19th Chestnut Street (-A) (with Connie Boswell)
25. Between 18th & 19th Chestnut Street (reject) (with Connie Boswell)*

* = new to CD

Jim gave full details of these new releases in the last magazine and now that the CDs have been received I can comment more fully on the quality and content. There are several tracks new to CD, which are marked above with an asterisk, and in most cases they were completely new to me too. The opening tracks are from Bing's recording session of June 13, 1939, a month which many collectors feel displayed Bing at the peak of his vocal career. I smiled at track 7 when Bing fluffs a line and ad-libs with Connie until the end of the song. Track 10 is of interest because the song was written by Harry Barris and Bing's recording of it illustrates the help he always tried to give Barris throughout his life. As usual, the sleeve notes are by John McNicholas, the producer of this magnificent series and he apologises for the poor quality of track 25 which was due to it being taken from a substandard taped transfer which was the only known source for this recording. Apart from this track, the quality is very good throughout. Running time: 73 minutes.



The Chronological Bing Crosby Vol. 27
February 9 - July 1, 1940

Jonzo Records JZCD 27 **UK**

1. Marcheta
2. Tumbling Tumbleweeds
3. If I Knew Then *
4. The Girl With The Pigtails In Her Hair
5. Devil May Care
6. The Singing Hills
7. I'm Waiting For Ships That Never Come In *
8. Beautiful Dreamer
9. (I Dream Of) Jeanie With The Light Brown Hair *
10. Yours Is My Heart Alone
11. Sierra Sue
12. Meet The Sun Half Way
13. April Played The Fiddle
14. I Haven't Time To Be A Millionaire
15. The Pessimistic Character (-A)
16. The Pessimistic Character (reject) *
17. Mister Meadowlark (-A) (with Johnny Mercer)
18. Mister Meadowlark (reject) (with Johnny Mercer) *
19. On Behalf Of The Visiting Firemen (-A) (with Johnny Mercer)
20. On Behalf Of The Visiting Firemen (-B) (with J. Mercer) *
21. Trade Winds
22. A Song Of Old Hawaii
23. Aloha Kuu Ipo Aloha

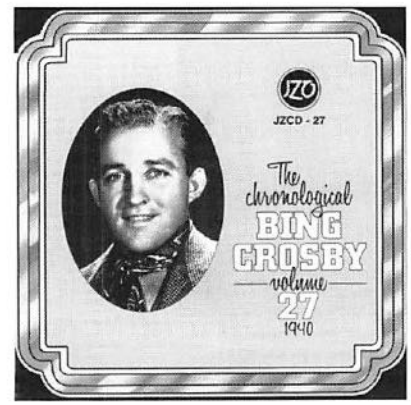
* = new to CD

Running time: 66 minutes

Again, the tracks new to CD have been marked with an asterisk and those members who have Wig's new discography need to fill in the details "JZCD-27" in the appropriate column. Track 16 contains rather spicy language which may upset some readers as Bing makes allegations about the parentage of the 'Pessimistic Character'. This parody subtitled 'Old Laughing Loser' appears to have been done specially to make fun of Dave Butler, the director of the film "If I Had My Way", from where the song comes. It was not really a rejected take as we know it. Track 18 again continues humorous ad-libs and it's a joy to hear these long hidden versions. Track 5 will be a favourite song for many who listen to this CD. Bing's voice is tremendous throughout these two CDs and if you are not a regular subscriber to the series make sure you pick up these particular discs while you can. Jonzo albums 26 and 27 are only obtainable in the UK and the rest of Europe from Jonzo Records, PO Box 212, Harrow, Middlesex HA3 7LD. Price £10.70 each postpaid (or both for £21.10). Cheques to be made payable to Jonzo Records. USA and Canadian members can obtain copies from Wig Wiggins (address inside front cover). The reaction from Crosby fans as each issue of the series comes out is wondrous to behold and Arne Fogel encapsulated it all with his posting on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum discussion board in June:

"So happy to have these treasures.

I can't believe, after collecting for forty years, that it's now possible to own every single Crosby phonograph record, in every take (including those that have been "unknown" until recently), conveniently on these beautiful CDs. For those who complain about the wait - and it WOULD be nice to have everything complete, I'll admit - ask yourself, could YOU, as ONE individual, complete the collating, remastering, art direction, research, annotation, manufacture, and distribution of TWENTY-SEVEN separate CDs in the space of just SIX years? Mind- boggling!



I do have to mention some errors, which many of you may have noticed: - The Andrews Sisters are continuously referred to as the "Andrew Sisters" in the text of volume 26. Volume 27 tells us that Bing's co-star in "If I Had My Way" was "Ed Brenel" ! - wrong, it was well-known character-comic El Brendel. Also, on 27, songwriter Gus Kahn is credited with co-writing "The Girl With The Pigtails In Her Hair" .. . Nope, it was Sammy Cahn. A couple of other smaller bits of misinformation in the notes tell us that the producer was probably very conscious of the pressure to get these out to an anxiously-waiting public. Totally understandable. For look what Mr. "Jonzo" has given us!

Those of you who may be trying to decide whether or not to pop for these gems (The Jonzo collection), Please remember, they will not be available forever, and they aren't going to get 'less rare' - now's the time. Remember too, that hundreds, if not thousands of Crosby collectors over the past half-century would have given their left (whatever) to have the opportunity to own this kind of "complete" coverage of Crosby's career on record, but such a thing would have been too amazing, too much of an "impossible dream" to come true. But now, it is a reality. You don't have to go scrounging around in garage sales and junk shops for thirty years like I did (and I was one of the younger ones!). Here it all is, just waiting for you! If you can, write the check. If you truly love Bing's work, and are in awe of his history, you will not be sorry."

Arne Fogel

Bing Crosby - The Best Of The Early 50's **Spectrum Music 544 648-2** **UK**

1. Sunshine Cake (with Carole Richards)
2. Chattanoogie Shoe-Shine Boy.
3 The Isle Of Innisfree.
4. Country Style
5. Y'All Come
6. Harbour Lights
7. Careless Hands
8. Tenderfoot *
9. Quicksilver (with the Andrews Sisters)
10. Stranger In Paradise
11. Shanghai
12. Moonlight Bay (with Gary Crosby)
13. If You Love Me
14. Zing A Little Zong (with Jane Wyman)
15. Once And For Always (With Rhonda Fleming)
16. At Last! At Last!
17. (Oh Baby Mine) I Get So Lonely
18. Changing Partners

* = new to CD

An imaginative selection from Universal in the UK which has been released on their Spectrum label. One track new to CD but several others which have not often been sold in digital form. "Tenderfoot" was written by Bing, Bob Bowen and Perry Botkin and originally issued using the pseudonym of Bill Brill for Bing. This issue shows the writers to be "Crosby / Botkin". Quality is excellent and it shows off the deep tones and easy delivery of the Crosby voice of the time to its best effect. Short sleeve notes by the compilers (Colin Morgan, Ossie Dales and Dave McAleer) explain that these are tracks which were popular in the early 1950s rather than songs which were recorded then. Some of you will have already noticed that one or two tracks were recorded by Bing in the 1940s. A very nice issue and Universal are to be complimented on this. Available in the USA over the Internet from CD Universe (http://www.cduniverse.com) for $10.95 and no doubt from other outlets too. Price: £6.99 in the UK. Running time: 53 minutes

No. 1 Hits and Million Sellers **Castle Pie PIEDD237** **UK**

CD1

1. Swinging on a Star
2. Pennies from Heaven
3. You're Getting to be a Habit with Me
4. The Moon Got in My Eyes
5. Out of Nowhere
6. Please
7. You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby
8. Sweet Leilani
9. Brother Can You Spare a Dime?
10. I Love You (Porter)
11. At Your Command
12. I've Got a Pocketful of Dreams
13. Love in Bloom
14. Soon
15. Don't Fence Me In (with the Andrews Sisters)
16. Red Sails in the Sunset
17. June in January
18. Only Forever

CD2

19. Too Marvellous For Words
20. I Can't Begin to Tell You
21. San Fernando Valley
22. I'll be Seeing You
23. Just One More Chance
24. Moonlight Becomes You
25. Sunday Monday or Always
26. Trade Winds
27. It's Easy to Remember
28. Sierra Sue
29. Dinah (with the Mills Brothers)
30. Remember Me
31. Three Little Words (Rhythm Boys)
32. Bob White (with Connie Boswell)
33. It's Been a Long Long Time
34. Hot Time in the Town of Berlin (with the Andrews Sisters)
35. Now is the Hour
36. White Christmas

A nice mixture of Bing's commercial recordings for the general public but not much to attract the Crosby collector. Nothing new to CD. Very reasonably priced at £6.99 though.

Too Marvellous for Words **Jasmine JASCD395** **UK**

CD1

1. I've Got a Pocketful of Dreams
2. Pennies from Heaven
3. Remember Me
4. June in January
5. Red Sails in the Sunset
6. Too Marvellous for Words
7. The Moon Got in My Eyes
8. You're Getting to be a Habit with Me
9. Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?
10. Bob White (with Connie Boswell)
11. Only Forever
12. Please (1932)
13. San Fernando Valley
14. I Can't Begin to Tell You
15. Shadow Waltz
16. Little Dutch Mill
17. Alexander's Ragtime Band (with Connie Boswell)
18. I'm an Old Cowhand
19. The Last Round-up
20. I Wished on the Moon
21. Goodnight Lovely Little Lady
22. Swinging on a Star
23. Don't Fence Me In (with the Andrews Sisters)
24. I'll Be Seeing You
25. Thanks

CD2

26. White Christmas (1942)
27. Moonlight Becomes You
28. I Love You (Porter)
29. Sunday Monday or Always
30. Love in Bloom
31. Soon
32. At Your Command
33. Dinah (with the Mills Brothers)
34. It's Easy to Remember
35. Trade Winds
36. It's Been a Long Long Time
37. Never in a Million Years
38. Hot Time in the Town of Berlin (with the Andrews Sisters)
39. Sweet Georgia Brown
40. Out of Nowhere
41. Just One More Chance (1931)
42. You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby
43. Pistol Packin' Mama (with the Andrews Sisters)
44. Dolores
45. Amor
46. What's New?
47. Sweet Leilani
48. Sierra Sue
49. Be Careful it's My Heart
50. Now is the Hour

Another bargain offer from Jasmine who, thanks to Geoff Milne's sterling work, certainly do their best to keep Bing in the record shops. Nothing new to CD but an interesting mixture nevertheless. Not to be confused with the 1996 CD of the same name issued by Charly Records. Price £7.99, or $14 in the USA from Select Circles. Stan White sent me the following comments:

"This double CD set has a subtitle. 'The top fifty of his many greatest hits'. These songs are chosen by the man who made the transfers from pressings to the master for these CDs - producer Geoff Milne, who also wrote the booklet notes which are dated January 2002. True, there is nothing new to CD and perhaps the songs chosen would not be your choice, a matter which Geoff Milne covers in his notes thus, 'How is it possible to select just

fifty? Well, go ahead and try it, then argue amongst yourselves about whose selection is any better than the others - there really isn't an answer except to say that almost anything Bing sang was good and worthy of inclusion.' All of the songs chosen reached the top of the best sellers list, which should not be confused with those that sold a million or more, although some of these did, not all million sellers reached the top of the best sellers, they reached a million, and often many more, through steady sales across a period of time. The year these songs became top sellers precedes the song title on the CD listings. The compilation is not in chronological order as the songs are arranged to give a well balanced programme. The reproduction quality is excellent, the booklet notes are informative and interesting. Playing time is over two and a half hours. - **Stan White"**

Bing Crosby - Golden Greats **Disky MP649972** **The Netherlands**

CD1

1. Where The Blue Of The Night (1945)
2. Please (1940)
3. Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams (1939)
4. Pennies From Heaven
5. Just One More Chance (1939)
6. Dinah (with the Mills Brothers)
7. Thanks
8. Love Thy Neighbour (1934)
9. I'm An Old Cowhand
10. Temptation (1933)
11. Did You Ever See A Dream Walking?
12. Sweet And Lovely
13. I Found A Million Dollar Baby (1940)
14. Stardust (1931)
15. Black Moonlight
16. Sweet Leilani
17. Blue Hawaii
18. Small Fry
19. Too Marvellous For Words
20. Bob White (with Connie Boswell)
21. An Apple For The Teacher (with Connie Boswell)
22. Too Romantic
23. You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby
24. The Moon Got In My Eyes
25. The Funny Old Hills

CD2

1. The Road to Morocco (with Bob Hope)
2. Moonlight Becomes You
3. San Fernando Valley
4. Dolores
5. Mr. Meadowlark (with Johnny Mercer)
6. San Antonio Rose
7. Deep in the Heart of Texas
8. You Are My Sunshine
9. I'll Be Seeing You
10. The Waiter, the Porter and the Upstairs Maid
11. Be Honest With Me
12. Yes Indeed (with Connie Boswell)
13. I Can't Begin to Tell You
14. Trade Winds
15. Swinging on a Star
16. Miss You
17. Walking the Floor Over You
18. Don't Fence Me In (with the Andrews Sisters)
19. Along the Santa Fe Trail
20. Sunday Monday or Always
21. Put it There Pal (with Bob Hope)
22. If You Please
23. Is You Is or Is You Ain't (ma Baby)? (with the Andrews Sisters)
24. McNamara's Band
25. White Christmas (1947)

CD3

1. Ac-cent-tchu-ate the Positive (with the Andrews Sisters)
2. Gone Fishin' (with Louis Armstrong)
3. Play a Simple Melody (with Gary Crosby)
4. It"s Been a Long Long Time
5. Alexander's Ragtime Band (With Al Jolson)
6. Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral (1945)
7. In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening (with J. Wyman)
8. Dear Hearts and Gentle People
9. Far Away Places
10. South America Take It Away (with the Andrews Sisters)
11. A Gal in Calico
12. The Whiffenpoof Song
13. Mule Train
14. Sioux City Sue
15. Pistol Packin' Mama (with the Andrews Sisters)
16. Baia
17. Busy Doing Nothin'(with W. Bendix and Cedric Hardwicke)
18. If I Loved You (1947)
19. Galway Bay
20. Sam's Song (with Gary Crosby)
21. Riders in the Sky
22. You Belong to my Heart
23. Yah-ta-ta, Yah-ta-ta (Talk, Talk, Talk) (with Judy Garland)
24. The Bells of St. Mary's
25. Now is the Hour

Ernest Sutkowski noticed this set in Tower Records in the New Jersey area and again it's a nice selection of songs which are out of copyright in Europe. Very competitively priced at $9.99 and ideal for those just discovering Bing. Nothing new to CD but one or two which aren't seen that often. Amazon in the UK are offering it for £9.99. The CD Universe web site had the following short review from a reviewer in West Covina, California.
"This album, I like for the most part. I like the slower songs of his, more than the jazzy ones! Brings back good memories."

Swinging On a Star **Rajon RMGSN 2016** **UK**

CD1

Sam's Song (with Gary Crosby) - Swinging On A Star - It's Anybody's Spring - The Moon Got In My Eyes - A Serenade To An Old-fashioned Girl - Would You? - Ain't Got A Dime To My Name - Chattanoogie Shoe Shine Boy - It's Always You - Mule Train - You Lucky People, You - East Side Of Heaven - In My Merry Oldsmobile - Far Away Places - I Surrender Dear - Sweet Potato Piper - Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams - Now Is The Hour

CD2

But Beautiful - The Bells Of St. Mary's - Going My Way - Welcome To My Dream - Be Careful, It's My Heart - Moonlight Becomes You - The Anniversary Waltz - Birds Of A Feather - Home On The Range - S'posin' - Stardust - Too Romantic - My Melancholy Baby - On The Sentimental Side - Sweethearts - Blue Hawaii - Sweet Leilani - Shoe Shine Boy

I spotted details of this new issue on the Tower Records web site. An interesting mixture of songs, at the very competitive price of £6.84 in the UK and $9.99 in the USA. Can't comment on quality etc. as I have not heard this CD but Charlie Baillie tells me that it is well-recorded. This is at least the seventh CD bearing the title "Swinging on a Star" and here's another one!

Swinging On a Star **ZYX Music PublicDom PDI 6106-2** **Germany**

Swinging on a Star - Day by Day - I Love You (Porter) - Ac-cent-tchu-ate the Positive (with the Andrews Sisters) - Pistol Packin' Mama (with the Andrews Sisters) - Moonlight Becomes You - You Belong to My Heart - I'll Be Seeing You - Remember Me? - I Can't Begin to Tell You - San Fernando Valley - South America Take It Away (with the Andrews Sisters) - Sunday, Monday or Always - You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby - Far Away Places - White Christmas - Adeste Fideles

HMV have this on sale in their stores in the UK for £7.99. The web site for ZYX Music (www.zyxmusic.com) states the album was issued on May 6, 2002 and that it sells in the USA for $4.99. We would have loved this CD some years ago but now it's rather old hat with the usual familiar tracks. Again, a nice package for the general public though.

All the Number One Hits **Goldies Records 25448** **The Netherlands**

1. Out Of Nowhere 2. Just One More Chance 3. At Your Command 4. Pennies From Heaven 5. Sweet Leilani 6. Too Marvelous For Words 7. White Christmas 8. Sunday, Monday, Or Always 9. Swinging On A Star 10. Hot Time In The Town Of Berlin (with the Andrews Sisters) 11. San Fernando Valley 12. My Baby Said Yes (with Louis Jordan) 13. Connecticut (with Judy Garland) 14. People Will Say We're In Love (with Trudy Erwin) 15. Road To Morocco 16. Dinah 17. Please 18. Brother, Can You Spare A Dime? - plus another 23 tracks

This 3-CD set was issued on May 21, 2002 and is being advertised by several companies including CD Universe who are offering it for $31.25. I have not purchased this set as I suspect that I shall have all the songs many times over and so far I have only obtained details of the first 18 tracks. I'll give full details next time around if I get them.

Bing Crosby - 16 Great Hits **ZYX Music PublicDom PDI 6109-2** **Germany**

This is being advertised by HMV for £7.99 and is quoted as having been released on May 21,2002. In fact it is a reissue of '16 Most Requested Songs' which was originally released in 1992 on the Columbia / Legacy label and numbered CK48974.

You Are My Sunshine **Delta Blue 63047** **UK**

CD1:

Let A Smile Be Your Umbrella - Exactly Like You - Mama Loves Papa - Oh Tell Me Why - Whispering - Some Sunny Day - Little One - San Fernando Valley - Along The Way To Waikiki - Start The Day Right (with Connie Boswell) - Between 18th & 19th On Chestnut Street (with Connie Boswell) - Mister Meadowlark (with Johnny Mercer) - New San Antonio Rose - Sweet Leilani - In A Little Spanish Town - Vaya Con Dios - Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral - Dinah - The Jones Boy - You Are My Sunshine

CD2:

True Love - I Got Plenty O' Nuttin' - Love Is Just Around The Corner - Mack The Knife - An Apple For The Teacher (with Connie Boswell) - Deep In The Heart Of Texas - Swinging On A Star - Dream A Little Dream Of Me - I'm Gonna Sit Right Down And Write Myself A Letter - Down Among The Sheltering Palms - Where The Blue Of The Night - It's Within Your Power - Someday We'll Meet Again - Let's Try Again - Waltzing In A Dream - Here Is My Heart - I'm Playing With Fire - Don't Fence Me In (with the Andrews Sisters) - The Moon And The Willow Tree - White Christmas

A curious mixture but nice to see that ten of the "Bing With A Beat" recordings are featured, as I've always liked these 1957 tracks. Another bonus is "Oh Tell Me Why" which is not seen too often on CD. I haven't actually heard this CD, but at £6.99 it must be a bargain. ICC member Gerard Hanlon seems to confirm this as he writes from Ireland:

". . . As I pen these few words, the maestro is on my CD player. I picked up a cheap label CD from Delta Music and the revelation for me - and the reason for the purchase - were the tracks 'Mack The Knife' and the old Fats Waller number 'I'm Gonna Sit Right Down And Write Myself A Letter'. These are superb versions, equal to the best and totally

new to me. But then I am a very definite novice compared to the erudite contributions which are found in BING. . ."

CBS Radio 1947 **N2K NFM007** **UK**

1. Swinging on a Star
2. Going My Way
3. It Had to be You
4. Don't Fence Me In
5. The One I Love (Belongs to Somebody Else)
6. Amor
7. Bless 'Em All
8. Tumbling Tumbleweeds
9. Frankie and Johnny
10. The One I Love (Belongs to Somebody Else)
11. Jeepers Creepers
12. I'll Be Seeing You
13. Is You is or Is You Ain't (My Baby) ?
14. This Heart of Mine
15. Oh What a Beautiful Morning
16. Speak to Me of Love
17. Sunday Monday or Always
18. Two Sleepy People
19. Ac-cent-tchu-ate the Positive
20. There Goes That Song Again
21. Pistol Packin' Mama
22. It's Love Love Love
23. I Couldn't Sleep a Wink Last Night
24. I'm Making Believe
25. Sleigh Ride in July

This CD was also spotted on the Internet as being newly released and Amazon (UK) were offering it for £6.99. Yet again, I must confess that I haven't heard it but it seems to have a fascinating mixture of radio tracks. I am sure that the title of the CD is a misnomer because Bing sang many of these songs during the war years. I would not be surprised if some of the tracks did not feature Bing and I would welcome any further information from members.

Best Selection of Bing Crosby **Universal Music UICY-8012** **Japan**

1. Swinging on a Star
2. Pennies From Heaven
3. Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral
4. Around the World
5. Stardust
6. Tea for Two (with Connie Boswell)
7. Oh! What a Beautiful Morning (with Trudy Erwin)
8. Danny Boy
9. You Are My Sunshine
10. Clementine
11. Quizas, Quizas, Quizas
12. Vaya Con Dios
13. Siboney
14. Baia
15. Hasta Manana
16. You Belong to my Heart
17. I Love Paris
18. La Vie En Rose
19. Violets and Violins *
20. La Mer
21. Blue Hawaii
22. Sweet Leilani
23. Here Ends the Rainbow
24. Sail Along Silv'ry Moon
25. White Christmas

* = new to CD

I am grateful to Miho Sasaji for details of this new Japanese CD. Miho comments: "The sound quality varies with tracks. Tracks 23 and 24 are recorded with too much echo effect, same as the Japanese CD of Bing's Hawaiian songs released several years ago. However, some tracks sound good. Especially, I was impressed by 'Baia', in which Bing sings wonderfully with Xavier Cugat and his orchestra. I liked 'Violets and Violins' too." Reference to Wig's new discography indicates that there is only one track new to CD and that is number 19 but several of the other tracks are fairly rare in digital form too. The CD sells for 1700 yen in Japan which is about £9.50 or $13. This CD will probably be difficult to obtain in other parts of the world and will cost substantially more than the price in Japan but see your specialist record store for further details.

GUEST APPEARANCES

Sinatra in Hollywood 1940 - 1964 (6-CD Box Set) **Warner Bros 81227828523** **USA**

CD5 Well, Did You Evah! (alternate mix) - promotional track for "High Society"

CD6 Mr. Booze - Style (alternate mix)

Ken Barnes drew my attention to this newly issued CD box set of Frank Sinatra's film soundtrack songs. Ken was particularly impressed with the remix of "Style" in stereo. He tells me that the set is beautifully put together with a wonderful 80 page hardback book (with photos of Bing) and great sound quality throughout. As you can see, only a little Bing content is in evidence but it sounds like a 'must-have' for the Sinatra fan. The price in the USA is $119.98 (or $97.99 through Amazon.com) and Amazon in the UK are offering it for £63.99. The review on the Amazon site reads as follows:

> It's hard to discover any facet of Sinatra's career that hasn't already been explored ad infinitum, but that's just what Rhino has done in this massive, six-disc retrospective that chronicles the Chairman's long association with Hollywood. While most are aware that Sinatra earned his Tinseltown credibility in *From Here to Eternity* and *The Man with the Golden Arm*, his career in films stretched all the way back to 1941's prescient *Las Vegas Story*. This is quite literally a treasure trove for Sinatra fans. Fully 90 percent of the 160 songs, interviews and promotional pieces have never been commercially available before. It is, in a sense, the history of a parallel

Sinatra universe, often sharply different - especially after he became a bona fide box-office attraction - from the recording career it accompanied. While much of the early material displays the easy-going crooner teen heart-throb who can often seem like yet another totally different Sinatra persona, the vibrant swing of World War II clearly begins to push him to greater heights. From precious, fly-on-the-wall moments (Sinatra, Dean Martin and Bing Crosby goofing their way through a *Robin and the 7 Hoods* tracking session) to Frank hammering Broadway fare into his own likeness (*Guys and Dolls, Carousel, On the Town, Finian's Rainbow*) and the swinging heights of *Pal Joey* and *The Joker Is Wild*, this set offers a remarkably complete chronology of a major aspect of the singer's legendary accomplishments. Historian Scott Allen Nollen's comprehensive notes add crucial insights and context, helping to focus the set's sprawling scope. **Jerry McCulley**

Dick Tracy In B Flat **EMI Comedy 5395092** **UK**
Happy, Happy, Happy Wedding Day (overture - with cast) - Whose Dream Are You? - Barnacle Bill The Sailor (parody) - Whose Dream Are You? (reprise) - All The Things You Are (parody - with Frank Sinatra) - Sunday, Monday Or Always (parody - with Frank Sinatra & Bob Hope) - Happy, Happy, Happy Wedding Day (finale - with cast)
This, the most famous of all the Command Performance shows, originally recorded on February 15, 1945, has been issued at the competitive price of £7.10 on the expanding EMI Comedy label. This show has been on CD before but it was rather expensive and it is therefore doubly welcome this time. Our thanks to Barry Britten for telling us about this issue.

Paul Whiteman : "A Pops Concert" **Naxos Nostalgia 8. 120520** **UK**
High Water - La Paloma - Moonlight And Roses - Southern Medley
Issued in May, this CD contains a couple of doubtful Crosby tracks in 'La Paloma' and 'Moonlight & Roses' but Bing was certainly strongly in evidence on the other two tracks listed. The Naxos company continues to produce some interesting albums on its Nostalgia label. Price: £4.99.

Paul Whiteman and his Dance Band, Vol. 1 **Naxos 8.120511** **UK**
You Took Advantage of Me - Mississippi Mud (with Irene Taylor) - My Pet - Oh, Miss Hannah! - Changes - Ol' Man River - There Ain't No Sweet Man That's Worth the Salt Of My Tears - Makin' Whoopee - Muddy Water - I'm A Dreamer, Aren't We All - I'm In Love Again - Wistful and Blue - Louise - I'm Coming Virginia - From Monday On
Another Naxos album, which we missed when it was issued in December 2000. The Naxos web site indicates that Bing was also involved in two other tracks on the CD - 'Lonely Melody' and 'San' but this is undoubtedly incorrect. The web site also suggests that Bix Beiderbecke played on the 'Wistful & Blue' recording and this too is inaccurate.

Overall an amazing amount of new audio material. Is it because of the impending centenary celebrations or is Bing selling better nowadays? Now, let's move on to some visual delights as there's lots to tell you about in that section as well!

DVD AND VIDEO CORNER

Bob Hope - The Road to Collection (Road to Morocco / Road to Singapore / Road to Utopia / Road to Zanzibar) was duly released on DVD by Universal in the US and Canada on March 5 as anticipated in our last issue. Region 1 encoding. Ken Barnes has kindly reviewed this for us.

DVD REVIEW - THE ROAD SHOW SERIES
This 4-disc set (comprising the four "Road" pictures owned by Universal) was issued in the USA in March as part of an extensive series entitled "Bob Hope: The Tribute Collection" covering ten films in all. If you have a DVD player (multi-region) and a multi-standard TV (one bought in, say, the last five years) then this is well worth obtaining. Of course, just about everyone who is a fan of Bing will probably have these titles on VHS. But there are still two good reasons for buying this set:

1. These newly mastered versions offer vastly superior picture and sound quality.
2. They come with some interesting Special Features.

Presented in a maroon and gold box with a caricature of Hope (but no mention anywhere of Bing or Dottie), the package looks nice on a shelf, but is not as good a design as the laserdisc boxed set issued a few years ago - which I still treasure. But while the laserdiscs offered about 40 per cent better quality than VHS, these DVDs are easily 60 per cent better. What's more there is a real effort here to bring "Singapore," "Zanzibar," "Morocco" and "Utopia" into the DVD age. Each movie is broken down into 18 chapters allowing easy access to favourite scenes, etc. Although the compiler clearly had no knowledge of song titles except in the case of "Morocco" where the title song and "Moonlight Becomes You" are listed.

As for the Special Features, these include trailers for all four movies (which the laserdisc set didn't), a 14-minute

featurette "Bob Hope - The Road To Success" which is repeated on all four discs. It's not bad, but in trying to cover Hope's long career in so brief a timespan, the makers fail to hit the target. Both Crosby and Lamour are given credit for the way they supported Bob in the films - but it is stated that Hope was ". . .the glue that held the Road pictures together." Also it is said that "Bing always got the girl." Not true, of course.

The other special features differ from disc to disc. "Singapore" (in which Bob has third billing after Crosby and Lamour) has an interesting featurette compiled from archive clips called "Entertaining The Troops" (which has nothing to do with Bing - but it's good nostalgia), "Zanzibar" has excerpts from a "Command Performance" (1944), "Morocco" contains clips from a 1945 "Command Performance" (no Crosby content in either of these) but it's "Utopia" that carries the real jewel of the set - "Hollywood Victory Caravan" - which is presented in its entirety finishing with Bing singing "We've Got Another Bond to Buy." Along the way, it's a star-spotting exercise with big names like Barbara Stanwyck, Alan Ladd, Betty Hutton (doing an extended song and dance routine), pianist Carmen Cavallaro doing Gershwin's "I Got Rhythm," Olga San Juan doing a Latin number replete with fruit salad headgear (who does that remind you of ?) and - Oh, yes, there's Bob Hope too. Actually, there's more Bing than Bob in this one. It all ends with Humphrey Bogart making a speech and introducing Bing for the finale. The picture quality is pretty good here but the sound is awful and quite distorted at times. But so what ? This is a genuine piece of World War II showbiz history.

Each disc has production notes - cast and filmmakers and a Photo Gallery. "Singapore" and "Morocco" even have singalong sections.

All the discs are attractively packaged - each in its own jacket so that all could be released singly - and are. But if you want all of them, the boxed set is cheaper and is very satisfying. One shining aspect about "The Road To Success" is that while it praises Bob Hope's talent and versatility, there is the inference that it was the "Road" pictures that made him a major star. The fact is that Bing was already a huge star before the series began and it may not have made much difference to his subsequent career. Of course, the "Roads" didn't do him any harm either.

And this boxed set won't do you any harm. I urge you to get a DVD player and start your collection right away with this. You really will enjoy it.

Ken Barnes

My Favorite Blonde / Star Spangled Rhythm was also advertised as being issued on March 5 and the price for this double DVD at Amazon was $18.74. Again Region 1 encoding.

Let's Make Love was released on DVD (Region 1 only) on May 14 as part of the *Marilyn Monroe: The Diamond Collection Vol. II.* The set features five restored Monroe classics on DVD from 20th Century Fox, *Don't Bother to Knock* (1952): *Monkey Business* (1952): *Niagara* (1953): *River of No Return* (1954) and *Let's Make Love* (1960). Price $59.99 but the films are available individually as well and the one with Bing costs $14.98.

Looking ahead, Ken Barnes is still hopeful that he will be able to issue *Road to Rio* on DVD in the UK and Australia. Also Ken has been given the go-ahead by Universal in the UK to issue *Holiday Inn* on DVD for Region 2 and there will be lots of extras which will make it a very special issue indeed. A possible November release date is in prospect. Ken has suggested that Universal also issue a CD containing all the songs from both *Holiday Inn* and *White Christmas.*

Next we have news of two excellent video releases from Festival Films in NTSC format (USA & Canada).

1. Bing Crosby & Friends - Vol. 8 - "All-Star" Show

Broadcast on CBS on February 15, 1964, this is the complete 60 minute show with the original Pepsodent and Quaker State Oil commercials. To round off the video, there is an episode of Bing's half hour comedy show from 1965 - "Operation Man Save" - with Beverly Garland, Frank McHugh and special guests Joan Fontaine and Dennis Day.

Total running time is approximately 85 minutes. Price: $25, postpaid in the USA and Canada, obtainable from Festival Films, 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, MN 55331, USA (phone: 952-470-2172). Payment may be made by VISA, Mastercard, personal checks or purchase orders (from schools and libraries). Your charge account will not be billed until shipment is made.

Lionel Pairpoint, Greg Van Beek and I are working on a book about Bing's TV appearances and it will describe the show as follows:

No. 70 15th February 1964 - Bing Crosby Show for Lever Brothers (CBS) (a)

Produced and directed by Nick Vanoff. With John Scott Trotter and his Orchestra, Peter Gennaro. Kathryn Crosby, Rosemary Clooney, Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Bob Hope.

*Pennies From Heaven	
*Something To Do	with Rosemary Clooney, Kathryn Crosby & Peter Gennaro
*I Believe In You	with Bob Hope

I Want To Be Happy	(b)	Orchestra & Chorus
*Dream	(c)	with Kathryn Crosby

*The Oldest Established Permanent Floating Crap Game In New York with Frank Sinatra & Dean Martin

Medley:

*Don't Fence Me In	with Rosemary Clooney
*I'm An Old Cowhand (From The Rio Grande)	with Rosemary Clooney
*She'll Be Comin' Round The Mountain	with Rosemary Clooney
*The Crawdad Song	with Rosemary Clooney
*San Antonio Rose	with Rosemary Clooney
*Down In The Valley	with Rosemary Clooney
*On Top Of Old Smokey	with Rosemary Clooney & Chorus
*You Are My Sunshine	with Rosemary Clooney

Stranger In Paradise	(d)	Orchestra & Chorus

Medley:

*A Scarf, A Stool And Imagination	(e)	with Chorus
Imagination		Rosemary Clooney
*I Left My Heart In San Francisco	(e)	with Chorus
Two Ladies In De Shade Of De Banana Tree	b)	Orchestra & Chorus
My Ship		Kathryn Crosby
*Love Makes The World Go Round	(e)	with Rosemary Clooney
*A Scarf, A Stool And Imagination		with Rosemary Clooney, Kathryn Crosby and Peter Gennaro.

Bing enjoys himself with Kathryn, Rosie and Peter Gennaro

Notes:

(a) Recorded 27th October 1963 & 3rd February 1964. A video version of the entire show was issued by Festival Films in 2002 titled 'Bing Crosby & Friends - Vol. 8 - "All-Star" Show'.
(It is not difficult to believe that some portions of the show were filmed more than three months apart. The segments featuring Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Bob Hope have obviously been recorded separately. In addition to the vocal duet there is a two-part sketch focusing on Bing and Bob's disparate and entirely fictional versions of their first meeting in which Bob Hope plays a somewhat dishevelled caddy and Bing, an equally shabby, "shoeshine boy", who warbles a few lines from 'Where The Blue Of The Night'. This particular sketch with Hope was included in the Goodtimes Home Video 'Bing Crosby - Hollywood's Greatest Entertainer' issued in 1991.)

(b) Accompaniment for dance routine by Peter Gennaro.

(c) An audio version was issued on Limited Edition Club LP JGB1007 - 'B.C. - T.V. (Bing On The Box)'

(d) Accompaniment for dance routine by Kathryn Crosby and Peter Gennaro.

(e) As Bing starts to sing, Rosemary Clooney sings a few lines of 'Hi-Lilli Hi-Lo' contrapunctally. An audio version of the whole song was issued on Broadway Intermission LP BR-136 'Bing Crosby - From Bing's Personal Collection - Crosbyana Volume 6'.

"Bing Crosby, who can somehow do no wrong in front of the camera, ambled his way, effortlessly, through his hour Saturday night special on CBS-TV. His tired pals, Bob Hope, Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin, didn't generate much excitement. It was left up to Peter Gennaro and his dancers to add any sparkle the programme had.

Bing's wife, Kathryn, was not much of a plus or minus in the line-up. She was there and she did, very nicely, what she had been taught to do which was a novelty in itself. Actually, she was a welcome change from Bing's sons who usually show up on his TV clambakes."
("Hollywood Citizen News" 18th February 1964)

"This one had billing as 'a special' but therein lies a misnomer. There's nothing special about a programme, despite illustrious show business names, which lacks both wit and wisdom. . . Mrs. Crosby proved to be the hit of the show, being amiable and attractive. Otherwise Crosby's show was a disjointed effort.

While the various players gave a fair account of themselves, mainly via the song and dance material and the quipping clashes between Crosby and Hope, the programme itself was devoid of cohesion. It was as if each segment had been filmed on its own and then all the pieces were put together as an afterthought, with continuity not in mind.

Crosby was strong with 'Pennies From Heaven' and 'San Francisco' and he and spouse were fine with the 'Dream' combo but for the rest, well, it was just a lost world. . . .The show was probably okay for the fans but the advertised come-on must have left a number of people, unhappy."
("Variety" 19th February 1964)

2. Bing Crosby & Friends - Vol. 9 - Christmas Show

Bing's first one-hour Christmas Special for TV (although the only Christmas song is "White Christmas") was broadcast on ABC-TV on December 11, 1961. Filmed on location, Bing wanders the streets of London encountering Terry-Thomas, Marion Ryan, Miriam Karlin, Dave King, Ron Moody, Shirley Bassey and British street musicians, The Happy Wanderers, plus Bob Hope (in drag). This is the complete 60 minute show with the original commercials.

To complete the video is an episode of Bing's half hour situation comedy show from 1965 -- "Real Estate Venture" - with Beverly Garland, Frank McHugh and guest Ruth Roman. Total running time of the video is approximately 85 minutes.

Price: - $25, postpaid in the USA and Canada, from Festival Films, address above.

Bing is arrested by P. C. Ron Moody as The Happy Wanderers look on.

The next video can also be obtained from Festival Films although it is not one of their own releases. This also is in the USA format and needs a VCR which can play NTSC format videos to be viewed in the UK.

The Bob Hope Show

A classic hour show from May 25, 1955 with guests Bing Crosby, Jane Russell and Les Brown and his Band of Renown. Includes a hilarious skit in the office of Paramount Pictures producer Don Hartman who tries to persuade Bob to go to Australia to promote his new film "The Seven Little Foys". Bing throws a party for Bob and his date, Jane Russell. Lots of clips from Bob Hope films and three Road Pictures. Note: This is not a Festival Films release and the quality is a bit lower.

Running time is about 60 minutes. Price: $20 postpaid in USA and Canada from Festival Films (address above).

And that's all there is about the new releases until our Winter edition. If anyone out there wants to volunteer to do the reviews, please contact me as soon as possible.

Malcolm Macfarlane

BING ON MP3

In July, Universal Music Group began selling downloadable MP3 versions of some of their old albums. Artists to be featured are Muddy Waters, B.B. King, Gladys Knight and, it is good to note, Bing! An article about this in the San Francisco Chronicle by Benny Evangelista continued:

In a limited test, Universal Music, the largest of the world's big five record labels, will release about 1,000 of its hard-to-find back catalog albums through its online music subscription subsidiary, EMusic.com. In another groundbreaking step, Universal will allow the downloaded tracks to be burned onto recordable CDs or transferred to a portable digital audio player, actions the record industry has been reluctant to allow for fear of cannibalizing already falling CD sales revenue.

Analysts said the move is yet another sign that the recording industry is finally making progress in providing an alternative to popular file-sharing programs like KaZaa, which already allow users to download, copy and transfer MP3 songs at will.

"It's another baby step," said analyst Phil Leigh, vice president of technology research at Raymond James & Associates. "If they find it does generate significant incremental revenue, I think they'll be prepared to take the next step."

EMusic.com, which charges $10 to $15 per month for a subscription, will offer Universal's jazz, pop and classic hits from the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s. The artists include Olivia Newton-John, Aretha Franklin, B.B. King, Gladys Knight, Oingo Boingo, Chuck Berry and Pat Boone. Larry Kenswil, president of Universal's ELabs Internet commerce unit, said Universal wants to see whether it can generate new revenue streams from albums that are no longer making money from retail sales. Therefore, it's not worried about downloading and CD burning - two major factors the record industry blames for a global sales slump.

Still, the Universal-EMusic deal remains only a test. It will not include any current chart toppers like Eminem. Nor does Universal, a subsidiary of struggling French media giant Vivendi Universal, have any near-term plans to expand the selection. The Universal partnership gives EMusic — known mainly for its selection of tracks from lesser known independent artists — a major label, even though it is an in-house deal. EMusic.com, formerly based in Redwood City, was purchased in 2001 by Vivendi Universal, which subsequently moved the company to the San Diego offices of another online startup, MP3.com.

Vivendi's Internet operations posted an operating loss of $301 million last year. '

Feinery Records

In June, just before the death of Rosemary Clooney, we read that our honorary member, Michael Feinstein, was having a new record label created for him and that the first issues will feature Bing and Rosie. The article by Janelle Gelfand in the Cincinnati Enquirer continued:

A singer, pianist and archivist, Mr. Feinstein is "juggling a lot of plates in the air right now" - and he couldn't be happier. For starters, Concord Records is creating a new label for him, called Feinery. He'll produce four releases annually.

"It will give me the opportunity to release recordings that aren't mainstream, but important historically," he says. Not surprisingly, his first major project will involve his old friend Rosemary Clooney, singing duets with Bing Crosby in 1950s-era recordings for radio that were never commercially released.

"They are master tapes I found in Rosemary's basement, and they're in pristine condition," he says. "They've been sitting there all these years."

It makes sense that he would be rummaging around the basement of Ms. Clooney, the legendary "girl-singer" from Maysville who got her start at WLW in Cincinnati. They met when he was doing archive work for Ira Gershwin in the mansion next door, a bright-eyed boy from Columbus who stepped into her Beverly Hills, Calif., kitchen one day.

"He said, "I'm from Columbus," and he looked about 14," MIs. Clooney told the Enquirer in 1996. "He was getting the idea that he'd like to perform . . . All of a

sudden, people our age were so shocked by this young man's voice and his approach to what is referred to as the golden age of music.''

As he began to sing professionally, Ms. Clooney gave him his first bit of advice. It happened when she agreed to appear on his first album - "which, consequently, got me a lot of attention with her name being attached to it," he says.

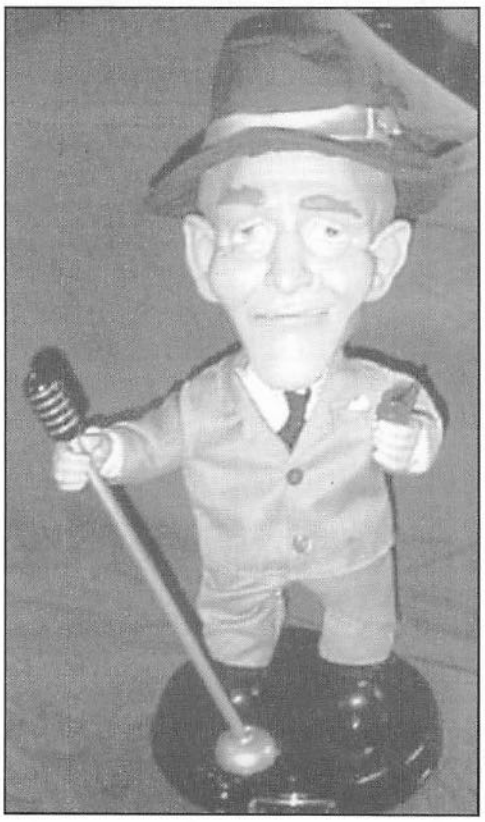
"We were singing, 'Isn't it a Pity.' She said, 'Honey, smile when you sing. You can hear the difference on the track.' That's the first thing that I learned from her," he recalls. Since then, they have performed often together. Ms. Clooney opened his cabaret, Feinstein's at the Regency, in 1999.

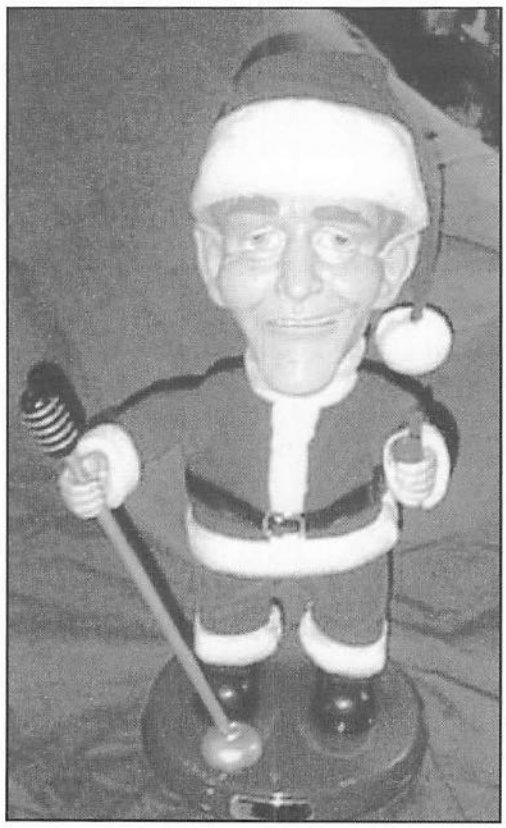
"I wanted to feature her as the first performer, because I knew it would give an identity to the club that would tell people what it was about," he says. "That was a great thrill for me, to be able to produce her as a performer."

This year, he was nominated for a Grammy Award - competing against Ms. Clooney for the second time. "It's very funny, because she is like my second mom. And who wants to compete with their mom for an award? Not me!' he says.

New Bing dolls

Ron Cannatella tells that there is an interesting new Bing product available in the USA. A toy company based in Texas called Gemmy is releasing a series of great entertainers dolls (19" tall) that "sing and dance." There are two "Bings" in the set, one in a grey suit with pipe and hat, and one dressed as Santa. Retail price: $34.99. Bing's original recordings of "Ac-cent-tchu-ate the Positive", "Cheek to Cheek", "I Wish You a Merry Christmas" and, inevitably "White Christmas" are featured. Dean Martin and Frank Sinatra are also available in the series.





Announcement

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE
37th. ANNUAL DINNER / MEETING
THE MANSION, ROUNDHAY PARK, LEEDS
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6th., 2002,
3pm - 10pm

A cordial and warm invitation is extended to all members, their partners and friends to attend our forthcoming dinner / meeting in the attractive setting of Roundhay Park, Leeds

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The dinner menu will be:
Red Onion Soup with Cheesy Croutons
Home-made Steak, Mushroom and Guinness Pie, with seasonal fresh vegetables and potatoes
Creamy Chocolate Mousse with Chocolate Liqueur Orange Biscuit
Fresh Ground Coffee, Mint and Turkish Delight Selection

Please book by sending a cheque for £19.60 per person to Michael Crampton.
Accommodation may be available at
Beechwood Hotel (tel. 0113 266 2578) or
Rydal Bank Hotel (tel. 0113 266 1178)

Bing Crosby
Hollywood

October 10, 1957

Mr. Stanley R. White
61 Stanley Street
Rothwell, Northants, England

Dear Stanley:

Thanks for your recent letter. Provided me with a great deal of information about things on the musical scene over there. I'm sure you must have liked the Jack Teagarden Earl Hines All Stars. I saw a great deal of Earl in San Francisco just before he left. He has a wonderful group there in San Francisco, featuring Muggsy Spanier, with Ralph Sutton on the piano. I consider Sutton the finest - at least for my taste.

From what you say about forthcoming releases in England, I am certainly going to be a little over-exposed. Seems to me they would be wiser to stagger these releases a little and thus get a better coverage, but of course they're all with different labels, so I suppose there's no real effective way to establish any control.

I'll try and have someone in my office do a little exploratory work and see what they can find out about the organ records you mention. My memory is so bad, and becoming worse with increasing age, that I am completely unable to come up with anything. I hope my secretary can.

Just came to Hollywood to do a few things for television. Nothing very spectacular or significant - just a couple of chores that I'd obligated myself to do. I've been away almost constantly since spring - mostly up in the Pacific Northwest and Canada, fishing and golfing, etc.

I appreciate very much your continued interest in the Glenn Miller search. Hope something results, but I certainly don't want you to spend too much time on what may be, after all, a futile effort. All good wishes -

As ever,

Bing Crosby

BC:lm

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15 Cents In Canada

FEBRUARY

KITTY CARLISLE
BING CROSBY

What Tamed the "Firebrand" Bennetts?

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